

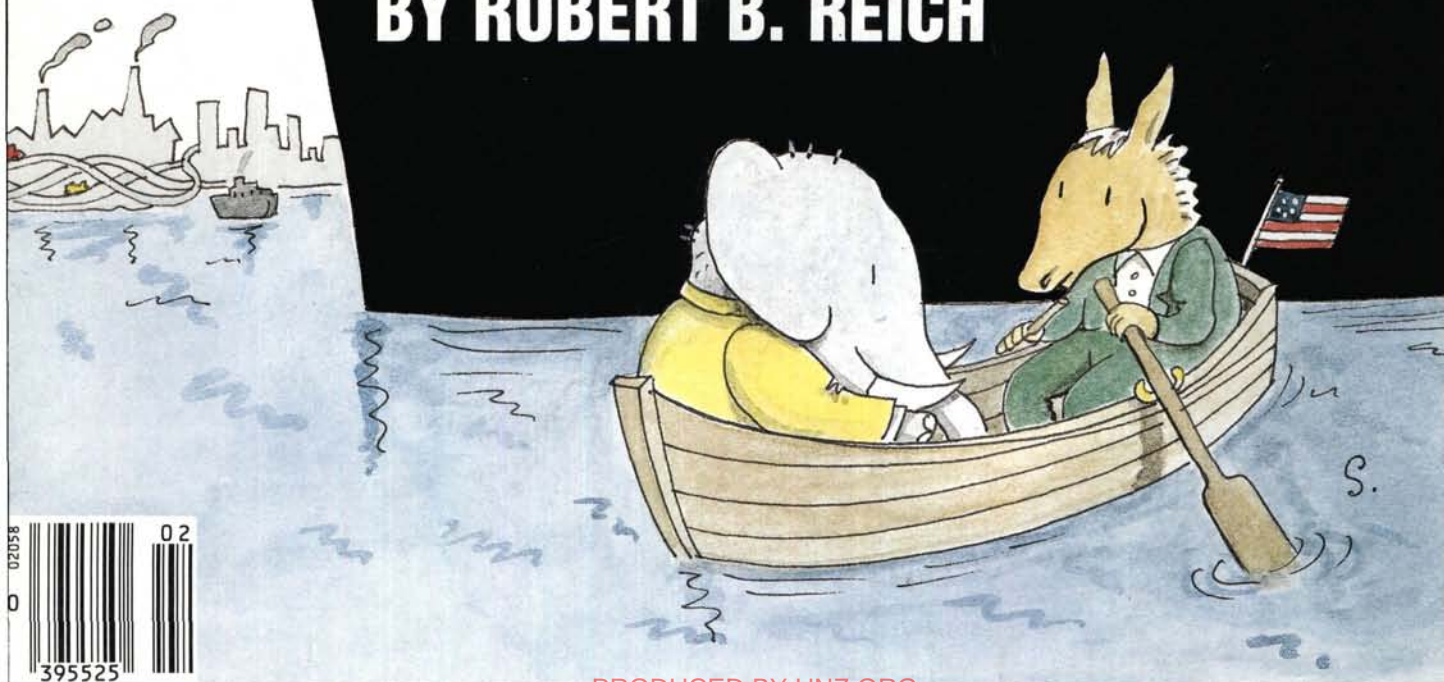
The Atlantic

WENDELL BERRY ON THINKING LOCALLY / FICTION BY ROXANA ROBINSON

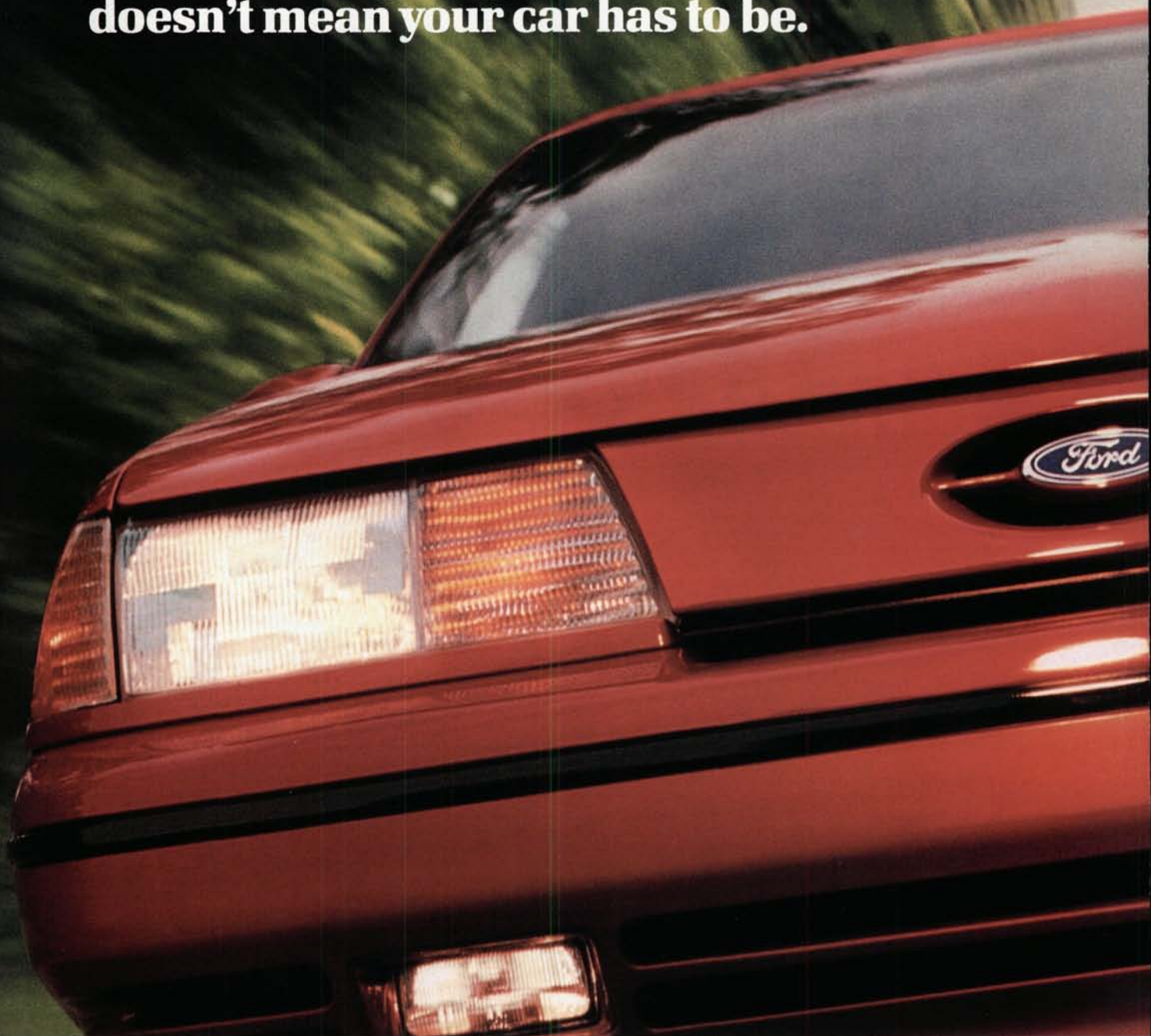
THE REAL ECONOMY

*The world has changed but not
the conventional wisdom: What the
Democrats and Republicans
need to know about economic
policy in the '90s*

BY ROBERT B. REICH



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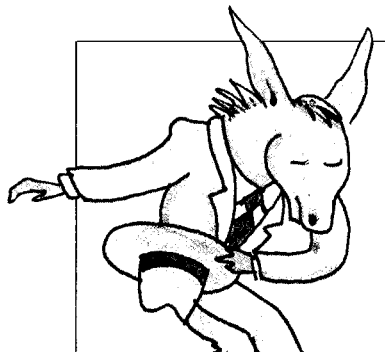
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Ford Taurus SHO

Have you driven a Ford...lately?





Page 35



Page 64



Page 20

REPORTS & COMMENT

20 NOTES: UPDATE

Is obviousness really so obvious?

by CULLEN MURPHY

22 THE MIDDLE EAST: CURSES IN VERSES

From the moment Iraqi forces overran Kuwait, Saddam Hussein and his Arab foes have battled over the airwaves through an ancient form of rhyme.

by EHUD YA'ARI AND
INA FRIEDMAN

28 WASHINGTON: FIGHTING THE LAST WAR

Certain aspects of the Bush Administration's desultory new anti-poverty measures recall an earlier war on poverty.

by NICHOLAS LEMANN

HUMOR, FICTION, AND POETRY

54 THE TIME FOR KISSING

by ROXANA ROBINSON

69 EARTH DAY STORY

by STEPHEN SANDY

79 MIDDLE

by GUY BILLOUT

35 THE REAL ECONOMY

A message for Republicans and Democrats alike: Stop fighting over how much money government is taking from the wealthy and redistributing to everyone else. Start worrying about how to develop our citizens' skills and the infrastructure necessary to link us to the new world economy.

by ROBERT B. REICH

61 OUT OF YOUR CAR, OFF YOUR HORSE

A noted environmentalist warns that those who would save the planet may sometimes be as dangerous as those who recklessly exploit its resources. Ecological good sense, he argues, begins not in thinking globally but in acting locally.

by WENDELL BERRY

64 LIVING SMALLER

Postwar affluence bulked out the average American house to three times the size of the Levittown Cape Cod. Now, the author argues, the economy might oblige Americans to live in smaller quarters again. He offers proposals that would make the typical house less expensive and better suited to an era of diverse family arrangements—and that would encourage neighborliness besides.

by WITOLD RYBCZYNSKI



ARTS AND LEISURE

80 SPORTS: A WORKING DOG

At Virginia's Triple Crown sheepdog trials the best

border collies in the country show off their physical, mental, and (some would say) spiritual qualities.

by DONALD MCCAIG

BOOKS

85 INEXPLICABLE DINOSAURS

The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy,
by David Cannadine

by ANTHONY BURGESS

88 THE OTHER KENNAN

George Kennan and the American-Russian Relationship, 1865-1924,

by Frederick F. Travis

by JAMES H. BILLINGTON

91 BRIEF REVIEWS

by PHOEBE-LOU ADAMS

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

4 745 BOYLSTON STREET

4 CONTRIBUTORS

8 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

16 THE FEBRUARY ALMANAC

95 THE PUZZLER

by EMILY COX
AND HENRY RATHVON

96 WORD WATCH

by ANNE H. SOUKHANOV

Cover illustration by
J. C. Suarès

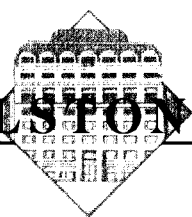


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745 BOYLSTON STREET



WHEN WITOLD RYBCZYNSKI, the author of "Living Smaller" in this month's issue, dug a foundation on a piece of land he owned in an old orchard south of Montreal, he didn't know he was going to build a house. Rybczynski, an architect, thought that his dream was to build a boat, and the first step was building a workshop for it. But in the course of designing the workshop he realized that his real dream was not to cast off but to be rooted. Rybczynski had lived in six different houses as a child and seven as an adult. The planned workshop evolved into the Boathouse, a small (1,200-square-foot), barn-shaped house. "The process of building," he has written, in *The Most Beautiful House in the World*, "... was a process of installing ourselves in a place, of establishing a spot where it would be safe to dream. We had to be old enough to recognize the particularity—and limits—of our dreams, but not too old to believe in them."

In the ten years since the Boathouse was built, it has changed little—partly, Rybczynski says, because making small repairs can seem harder than starting from scratch. He did add an eight-by-sixteen-foot study, which reminds him of the frescoed, cupboard-sized

study at Michelangelo's house in Florence, where one could escape to work. Rybczynski finds the Boathouse study congenial—he wrote not only *The Most Beautiful House in the World* there but also parts of *Home*, his widely acclaimed investigation of how several societies define comfort in a house. He has yet to find a solution, however, to the overflowing stacks of books that impede passage to his desk.

Rybczynski credits his wife, Shirley Hallam, with anticipating the "minutiae of everyday life that constitute a home." During the planning of the Boathouse she asked, "Why can't a kitchen be designed like a carpentry shop, or a

laboratory, where all the tools are out in the open?" And so the kitchen of the Boathouse leaves everything exposed, in an open system with a few drawers. It has worked out particularly well, Rybczynski says; he has found that you use what you can see. Like almost everything else in the Boathouse, the kitchen was built by the couple themselves.

Rybczynski rarely shows pictures of the Boathouse, because it isn't the only house referred to in the book's title. The most beautiful house in the world, he says, is the house you build yourself. —THE EDITORS



The Boathouse kitchen

CONTRIBUTORS

WENDELL BERRY ("Out of Your Car, Off Your Horse") is a writer, farmer, and environmentalist who lives in Kentucky. He teaches composition and literature at the University of Kentucky. His most recent books are *Harlan Hubbard: Life and Work* (1990) and *What Are People For?* (1990).

JAMES H. BILLINGTON ("The Other Kennan") is the Librarian of Congress. Billington is the author of several books, including *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture* (1966) and *Fire in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Faith* (1980).

GUY BILLOUT ("Middle") has received many awards for his magazine and advertising work, and has written and illustrated five children's books.

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INA FRIEDMAN ("The Middle East: Curses in Verses") is a correspondent for the Amsterdam newspaper *Trouw*.

DONALD MCCAIG ("A Working Dog") is a sheep farmer who lives in Virginia. He is the author of *The Butte Polka* (1980) and *Nop's Trials* (1984). McCaig's article in this issue is drawn from his new book, *Eminent Dogs, Dangerous Men*, which will be published next month.

ROBERT B. REICH ("The Real Economy") teaches political economy at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He is the author of numerous books on government, business, and the international economy, including *The Next American Frontier* (1983) and *Tales of a New America* (1987). Several of the ideas in Reich's article in this issue will be developed further in his forthcoming book, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st-Century Capitalism*, to be published next month.

ROXANA ROBINSON ("The Time for Kissing") received a National Endowment for the Arts writing fellowship in 1987. She is the author of *Summer Light* (1988) and *Georgia O'Keeffe: A Life* (1989).

WITOLD RYBCZYNSKI ("Living Smaller"), a professor of architecture at McGill University, in Montreal, has written extensively on architecture, housing, and technology. He is the author of *Taming the Tiger: The Struggle to Control Technology* (1983), *Home: A Short History of an Idea* (1986), and *The Most Beautiful House in the World* (1989).

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EHUD YA'ARI ("The Middle East: Curses in Verses") is the head of the Middle Eastern department of Israel Television and an editor of *The Jerusalem Report*, a new weekly magazine. He is a co-author, with Ze'ev Schiff, of *Israel's Lebanon War* (1984) and *Intifada* (1989).

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yet, in one's
effort to
touch it, to
acquire it for one's
own, a dilemma
unfolds.

There is first the
consuming problem of
where to put the money.

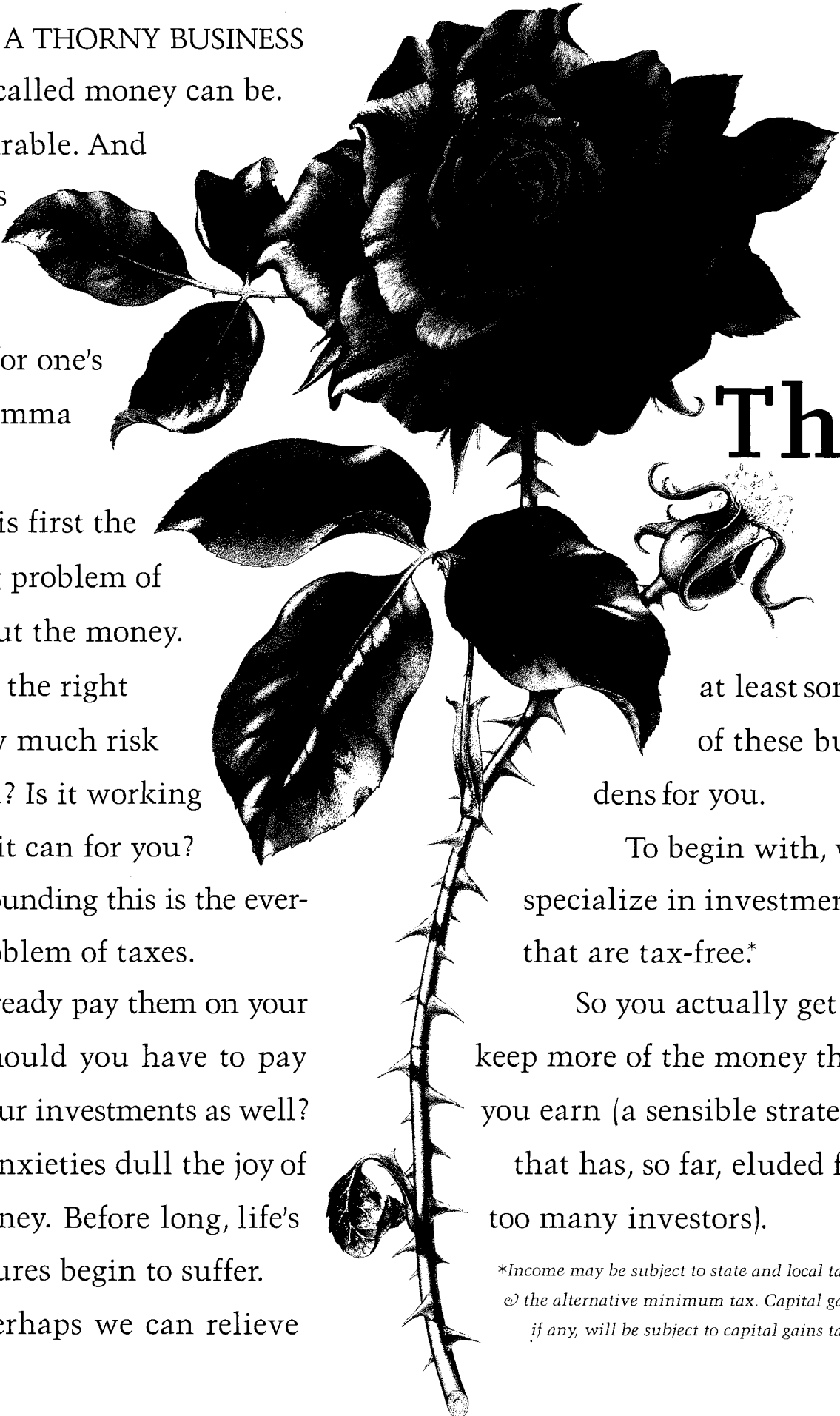
Is it in the right
place? How much risk
is involved? Is it working
as hard as it can for you?

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



LONGER SCHOOL DAYS

In "The Case for More School Days" (November *Atlantic*) Michael J. Barrett provides evidence to refute his own case. Using Hungary as an example, Barrett praises both the larger number of school days in its year and the higher percentage of students receiving a serious math education, leading one to think that Hungarian students had outperformed U.S. students in math. Yet Hungary outperformed the United States in only one of the three mathematical categories identified.

In fact, using the two tables Barrett provides, one finds no relationship between more school days and a better-educated student. Take Japan's school-year length and student achievement, which Barrett continually brings up to support his case. Japan has fifty-eight more school days than Hong Kong. Hong Kong, however, with only fifteen more school days than the United States, surpasses Japan in every category. And Flemish Belgium, which has the fewest school days (160), twenty fewer than the United States, not only outperforms the majority of other countries but also outperforms Israel (192 school days), one of the "four nations noted for their discipline and drive" (Japan is another; West Germany and South Korea, the other two, are conspicuously absent from all three achievement lists).

HENRY WIGGS
West St. Paul, Minn.

As a university instructor, I have noticed that freshmen and sophomores in college have very little mathematical ability. Part of the reason may be that "softer" topics are taught in the high schools instead—driver education, and so forth. However, a more basic reason is that the instructors in many of our high schools do not know *what* to teach, only *how* to teach. In schools of education they learn how to make up a class outline but not what

subject matter to put into it. Courses on teaching methods, rather than subjects like economics, mathematics, and engineering, are stressed. One high school teacher recently told me that she was glad she did not need to take economics and mathematics—they were too hard, she said. In my university classes the education majors rarely rank in the top 25 percent, let alone the top 10 percent.

The so-called schools of education must put a greater emphasis on subject matter and stress the quality of their students.

W. ROBERT BRAZELTON
Professor of Economics
University of Missouri
Kansas City, Mo.

Michael Barrett cites countries with school years longer than ours, but omits saying that most of those countries require fewer years, thus turning their young people loose mercifully early, when nature intended marriage to occur.

He favors algebra and calculus for all. Few will ever use these.

He correlates personal income with amount of education. But, as I wrote in *The College Board Review* (Summer, 1987), "College draws people of higher intelligence and those from richer families. Their lifelong earnings largely reflect these particular factors."

Barrett wants one state to pioneer a longer school year. I'd like some state to pioneer in the other direction: take whole years off compulsory schooling—perhaps do away with it entirely. After all, not all great Americans were intellectually spoon-fed: Washington, Lincoln, Franklin, Jackson, Truman, Edison, Orville Wright, Frank Lloyd Wright, Jack London, Mark Twain—none of these was "well" educated. School requires far too many subjects anyway. Verdi was well trained, but only in music: was that bad?

TERTIUS CHANDLER
Berkeley, Calif.

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I would pull my children out of school if Michael J. Barrett's longer school year were adopted. Surely nine months is long enough for those abstractions that may provide convenient structures momentarily but that deaden the imagination. Not abstractions but "the full interplay of emergent values" is needed, as Whitehead put it. He went on to say that "the soul. . . suffers the agonies of claustrophobia [from abstractions]. The transitions of humor, wit, irreverence, play, sleep, and—above all—of art are necessary for it." Barrett gives short shrift to these.

ISADORE TRASCHEN
Professor Emeritus of English
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Troy, N.Y.

Neither lengthening the school year nor making any other changes in the schools will solve the educational crisis, because the school system is not the cause of the crisis; it is merely a symptom. It is a symptom of a society that does not value education; a society in which parents plant their children in front of television sets, raise them in

houses without books, and are uninvolved in their education.

BARRY BENNETT
Assistant Professor of Legal Studies
Sangamon State University
Springfield, Ill.

I suggest that "the problem" is in fact "quality, not quantity," a position Michael Barrett debunks. As a parent with three children in public schools, I observe that classes are too large for individualized attention, teaching loads are often too heavy, there's too much administrative baloney with "in-service days" and the like, and, most important, there are too few accomplished teachers in the professional ranks—that is, people who can impart learning skills and information and can inspire children to enjoy learning.

ROBERT J. DIETER
Boulder, Colo.

Michael Barrett's article overlooks why American students do badly, and also a partial solution.

The causes? First, our kids remain terminally unmotivated. Second, our

school system is based on the outmoded *didactic* model, which emphasizes passive *knowing*, mastering factual content for rote memorization. It has yet to adopt the emerging *analytical* model, which teaches thinking, problem-solving, active doing.

No doubt useful for teaching immigrants basic skills a century ago, the didactic model is severely out of date today for Americans, who must now think for a living in a world awash in cheap labor. Barrett accepts wholesale the stolid and heavy model of "recalling mastered material." He doesn't mention the new paradigm of critical-analytical thinking, which might teach students how to handle new and complex situations. True, less content would be covered. But more would be retained, less forgotten over the summer.

BRIAN K. BECK
University of Wisconsin
Whitewater, Wis.

Michael Barrett replies:

Henry Wiggs's analysis involves a misunderstanding of the tables included with my article. The IEA's data on

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science and math achievement for various age groups are voluminous. Unfortunately, space permitted me to include only one table of test results, a "representative sampling," for twelfth-graders alone, of three of the six math disciplines surveyed in the 1981-1982 cycle. Wiggs points out interesting anomalies in this table, but he would really need to perform his calculations on the entire body of data.

Arguing simpleminded predictability is not, in any event, my intention. Nothing is simple, I wrote. "Time-and-learning theory finds a statistical relationship between the amount learned . . . and the time spent learning, but it is not a strong one. The reason is that so much else affects the student."

Unfortunately, much of what matters—for example, most of the nine "educational productivity factors" identified by Herbert Walberg—defies easy improvement. The length of the school year is crucial because it can be changed by a straightforward exercise of public will and civic decision-making. If this country could as easily repair the torn fabric of its home life (the

quality of home life being among the productivity factors cited by Walberg), perhaps I would have written about that instead.

DIRTY CHICKEN

Regarding "Public Health: Dirty Chicken," by Gene Bruce (November *Atlantic*): For the record, broiler chickens are natural, fresh products that can, like all fresh foods, carry diverse and unavoidable microflora. Pathogens on the product are easily destroyed by the heat of normal cooking. Traditional kitchen hygiene is more than adequate to guard against food-borne illness.

Your article relied heavily on the usual cast of critics of the industry, many of them labor-connected or labor organizers who want to increase the number of government inspectors who belong to a union. These folks get publicity by presenting a picture of conditions in the plants which is exaggerated, distorted, or downright false.

Your writer failed to conduct a cur-

rent, baseline interview with anyone from the broiler industry. The quotations from our former technical adviser are approximately two years old. We offered to arrange a current interview, but this offer was rejected.

The broiler industry spends tens of millions of dollars a year to achieve the highest standards of quality in its products. Our member companies stand behind their products, which typically carry the producing company's name. American consumers can continue to purchase, cook, and enjoy broiler products in the fullest confidence of quality and value.

GEORGE B. WATTS

President

National Broiler Council

Washington, D.C.

Your article "Dirty Chicken" was a wildly inaccurate, blatantly biased, irresponsible, incomplete, and mean-spirited piece of yellow journalism. If you had made a serious attempt at reporting the truth, your article could be forgiven as simply erroneous. Rather, your people were given every opportu-



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driver's side airbag. Seems one good thing does lead to another. **The Accord Wagon HONDA**

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nity to hear both sides of this story and be updated on industry developments but refused to meet with anyone whose point of view differed from the author's bias.

THOMAS J. SMITH
*Sr. Vice President & General Manager
Poultry & Pork Divisions
Continental Grain Company
Duluth, Ga.*

Your disgusting and largely erroneous portrayal of chicken as a dangerous food product is a disgrace to good journalism. Having spent fourteen years as a university researcher on poultry food products and twenty more years with a company producing such products, I know whereof I speak. Chicken is a safe, wholesome food when cooked and handled with reasonable care.

Cancel my subscription.

KENNETH N. MAY
North Wilkesboro, N.C.

Gene Bruce's article on poultry contamination and related human health problems is extremely informative. The fact that salmonella and other food-poisoning bacteria are continuously being recycled through the commercial food system cannot be overemphasized. Commercially manufactured poultry feed is loaded with poultry byproducts, including excrement. Another fact is that the routine mixing of antibiotics, to promote growth and control disease, has caused the evolution of "super salmonellae," which are resistant or immune to antibiotics.

In addition, the stress imposed on birds by the modern poultry operation may prevent them from coping efficiently with disease organisms, including food-borne infectious bacteria. One reason may be that, as studies have shown, normal, short-term stress produces corticoid hormonal responses that enable a bird to cope with the stressor. However, persistent stress can impair the bird's immune function. The chronic environmental stress imposed on birds in modern poultry production is exacerbated by genetic selection for rapid growth. Thus in broiler chickens, selected for muscle tissue—that is, meat—the ability to produce antibodies is very low, because the bird's biological resources are directed toward growth at the expense of other body functions.

The modern poultry enterprise is extraordinarily complicated and, I should add, intensely inhumane.

KAREN DAVIS
*President
United Poultry Concerns, Inc.
Potomac, Md.*

Gene Bruce replies:

Some industry spokespeople claim that I relied heavily on a small cast of industry critics, many of them labor connected. On the contrary, my research net was unusually wide and far-reaching. I interviewed more than a hundred people with expertise in key aspects of poultry processing and its implications for public health. Among this group were poultry scientists, enteric-disease specialists, veterinarians, microbiologists, food-safety experts, and current and former administrators from federal, state, and local government, including congressional staff members and more than a dozen USDA inspectors. I spoke with experts from the Department of Agriculture, the Centers for Disease Control, the Food and Drug Administration, private universities, state and local health departments, and consumer-advocacy groups, and held two lengthy interviews with the chief administrator of the Food Safety and Inspection Service. Most of the broiler companies I approached referred me to the National Broiler Council, which referred me to its technical adviser, whom I interviewed. If that interview is almost two years old, that is because I worked on the article for two years. I tried to arrange on-site visits and interviews at three of the top ten broiler companies—Tyson, Holly Farms, and Perdue—but all refused my requests.

I understand why industry representatives would be concerned to have a chance to comment on negative statements made about their product. However, I did give them a chance to comment, and they did comment. If this were not so, their letters would add new information to that presented in the article. They do not.

OIL-SPILL FANTASIES

The title "Oil-Spill Fantasies" (November *Atlantic*) fits the quality and content of Lee Clarke's article better than his subject—contingency plans.

In my fifteen years as a Coast Guard officer I have participated in successful responses to many major maritime casualties and oil spills, and have drafted contingency plans for local Coast Guard offices and various Caribbean nations, and provisions of the National Contingency Plan. I disagree with Clarke's opinion that spill cleanup is hopeless, and that contingency plans are therefore worthless fantasies (except to politicians and organizations who want to perpetuate an illusion of control). Either Clarke does not understand contingency planning or he is unable to interpret the examples that he says support his conclusions or both.

Clarke concludes that the *General Colocotronis* response is the only one of those he described that can be considered a qualified success, because 3.5 million of the 5.5 million gallons of cargo was lightered (pumped to another ship). He doesn't note the heroic and desperate actions required to save the *Exxon Valdez* and the remaining 80 percent of her 55 million gallons. The ship's torn bottom, shifting tides and waves working the ship on the reef, and the uneven distribution of the remaining cargo all worked toward breaking the ship's back, with the possible result of losing all cargo. Removing the remaining cargo and saving the ship was an overwhelming success of far more significance than the case of the *General Colocotronis*.

JAMES D. SPITZER
*Lt. Cdr., U.S. Coast Guard
Grosse Pointe Park, Mich.*

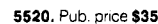
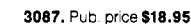
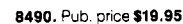
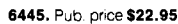
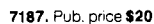
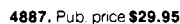
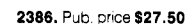
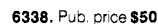
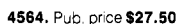
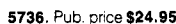
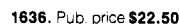
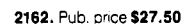
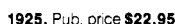
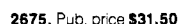
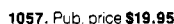
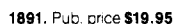
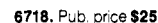
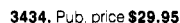
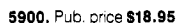
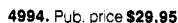
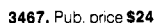
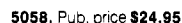
I am all for double-hulled tankers, but we should also recognize that offshore oil—anathema to environmentalists—comes ashore by pipeline, not by tankers. Louisiana ships 800,000 barrels a day that way. Arguments about tanker safety and offshore oil development should not be intertwined but often are. Lee Clarke contributes to this confusion by saying that the Florida Keys and Georges Bank are being "aggressively protected," although tanker spills should not figure into their development.

ROBERT H. PASCHALL
Sacramento, Calif.

Lee Clarke replies:

Although he's no doubt more expert than I am about contingency planning, Lieutenant Commander Spitzer is mis-

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taken that I don't understand it. The Commander and I agree that lightering is important, but I see no compelling reason to applaud Exxon for doing what it was supposed to do.

Robert Paschall is right that I should have mentioned oil development in Louisiana. The next major blow to the illusion of oil safety in the United States may well be enormous leaks and ruptures in the labyrinthine pipeline system feeding into that state. Much of that system is starting to deteriorate, and neither government nor industry is doing much about it.

IBM VAN WINKLE

Perhaps when James Fallows left for the monsoons of Malaysia, the Macintosh may have been "still not as fast and as flexible for writing as IBM PC-compatible computers," as he claims in "IBM Van Winkle" (November *Atlantic*). Newer Macs, particularly those with the 68030 chip, are at least as capable as IBM compatibles for word processing, superior for graphics, desktop publishing, and music and video editing, and easier to configure and use than IBMs in any application.

FRED WEHLING
Santa Monica, Calif.

James Fallows's assertion that an Intel Inboard 386 "fits into an expansion slot on IBM-compatible computers" is simply incorrect and can cause grief, as it did to me. I had to ship it back. Fallows closes his article in a somewhat humorous vein by saying, "Don't bother reading the spec sheets anymore." Believe me, you do this at risk of personal cost and trouble.

Fallows's recommendation to get a Magellan hard-disk management program, however, was a good one.

J. ROY GORSON
Arlington, Va.

The root difference between Macs and PCs is how human beings tell the machine what to do with information. With DOS computers the user must give instructions through keyboard commands. These commands are strings of letters, numbers, and other characters that are precise and inflexible in their format and content. It will not do to substitute a comma for a semicolon or add an extra space in any

DOS command. So the user must memorize dozens if not hundreds of arcane and often nonintuitive sets of keyboard strokes to make the DOS machine do the simplest of tasks.

I daresay this cumbersome method of communicating with computers was Apple's very reason for developing the Macintosh. From its inception Macintosh took a different road—one that, if you will, provides clear and easily interpreted signs to direct the traveler to his destination. One does not have to memorize the map to use a Mac, or even read the legend. The Macintosh link to the user is graphic, intuitive, and in plain English. For example, if one wants to find and get rid of an old letter (let's say that I have named this letter "Atlantic 10/31/90"), my Mac shows me a little graphic representation of the file on my screen (possibly in a folder called "Letters to Editors"). I simply drag the letter to the trashcan with the Mac mouse. A DOS user must first give keyboard commands to get to the proper directory and subdirectory to find the letter file (which, by the way, can neither have a name longer than eight characters nor include certain proscribed characters). He must then type a command something like DEL ATL1031.TXT. Is this fast or what?

WILLIAM T. TOWLES
Oak Grove, Va.

James Fallows replies:

I will never again write about the Macintosh-IBM schism, since this is such an irresolvable, theological point. Maybe linguistics is a better comparison than religion: the difference between IBM-type computers and the Macintosh is like the difference between English and French. Each is a complete and self-contained system. People prefer one or the other for reasons of habit and taste. Like Francophone nationalists, Macintosh users can argue that their approach has more *élan*, and that in a just universe it would command a larger overall market share than it now enjoys. The new Macintoshes are fast and flexible, and the Mac's video display has always been more elegant than the IBM's. If I had been more precise in explaining my bias, I would have said that I dislike the mouse-and-icon Macintosh approach, just as I'd rather do without the *le, la* and *tu, vous* distinctions of French. I have an investment in under-

standing the arcana of IBM-type commands, as I do in having learned the ins and outs of English spelling and usage. If I were making the argument on more objective grounds, I would have said that for a given amount of money, IBM-style computers generally offer more speed and power than Macintoshes—much as, for a given amount of fluency, English is generally more useful worldwide than French.

Mr. Gorson's computer must somehow be different from mine, since I've had an Intel Inboard running in an expansion slot for the past three years. (Note: although the board itself fits into an expansion slot, a cable must also be connected to the socket where the computer's original processing chip was. You remove the original chip when installing the Inboard.)

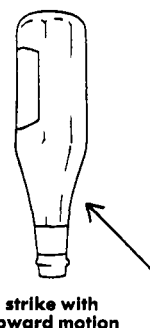
ADVICE & CONSENT

Allow me to amplify the advice given in the October Almanac on the proper way to extract catsup from a bottle: Hold the bottle in your left hand (unless you are left-handed, in which case hold it in your right hand) and turn it upside down, so that the mixture can be released. Now strike the bottle with your other hand in an upward-glancing motion. The catsup's inertia will tend to keep it in the same place while the bottle moves upward, leaving the red thixotropic mixture in the air on its mission to the food below.

This system is based on the laws of physics and works every time. Pounding on the bottom of the bottle just tends to drive the mixture up into the bottle. It's almost as good to wait it out.

Yours truly for catsup lovers,

HARRY LEVINSON
Seattle, Wash.



EDITOR'S NOTE:

The Atlantic failed to identify the translator of Tomás Eloy Martínez's report in the December issue, "Argentina: Living With Hyperinflation." He is Asa Zatz, also the translator of Martínez's *The Peron Novel* (Pantheon).

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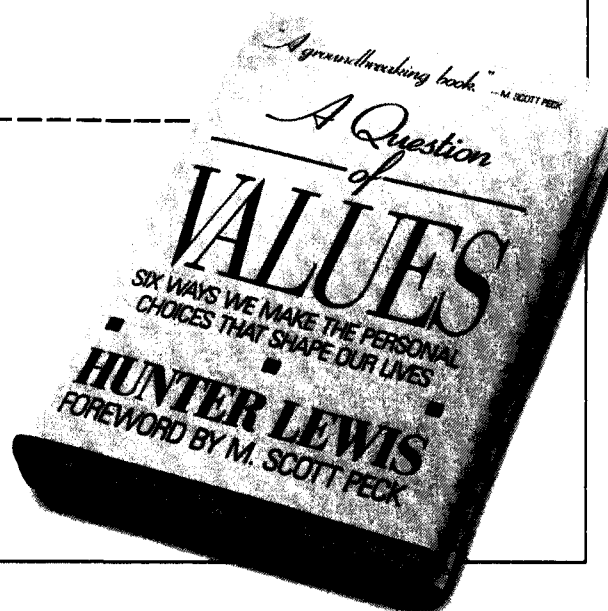
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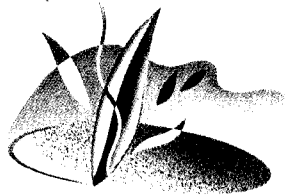
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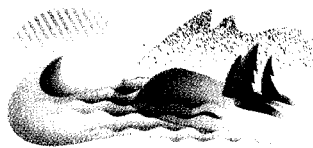
THE FEBRUARY ALMANAC



Q & A

How did the months of the year come to be their present lengths?

The roots of our calendar are too lengthy and tangled to permit a definitive explanation as to why, for example, July has 31 days and September only 30. According to one account, Julius Caesar decreed that the odd-numbered months (including the one subsequently named in his honor) should be the longer ones; the Emperor Augustus, not to be outdone, later added a day to the month named after him. It can be said with more confidence that February is the shortest month because the calendar of the early Romans began with March; January and February were added later to round out the year. The vagaries of our calendar continue to prompt efforts at reform. In the 1920s a number of companies, including Eastman Kodak and Fuller Brush, adopted for accounting purposes a calendar based on thirteen 28-day months; Kodak returned to a twelve-month calendar only last year.



ENVIRONMENT

February 2-5, in Washington, D.C., veterans of the nine-year struggle to win passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), which put 104 million acres of Alaskan territory under federal protection, will celebrate the legislation's 10th anniversary. Celebrate Wild Alaska, the group that is organizing the festivities, intends to use the occasion to publicize what it believes to be shortcomings in the original legislation—most notably, a loophole that leaves the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge open to gas and oil development.

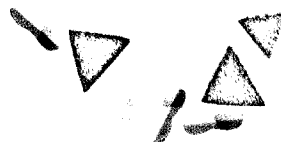
GOVERNMENT

February 4 is the deadline for the President to send a budget for fiscal year 1992 to Capitol Hill. 19, in the town of Salamanca, New York, which occupies land belonging to the Allegany Indian Reservation, the last extension of a 99-year lease expires. Under the terms of the lease townspeople rented land for as little as \$1 an acre per year. Now the rents will rise to market rates. The Indians on the reservation (they happen to be Seneca Indians) will also receive \$60 million from the state and federal governments in compensation for a century of diminished income. Also in February first-class postage rates are scheduled to rise, although the amount of the increase will not be announced until shortly before new stamps go on sale. The U.S. Postal Service this month will unveil the new first-class domestic-rate stamp, known as the "F" stamp, featuring a tulip, along with another undominated stamp, which will fill the price gap between the current 25-cent first-class stamp and whatever the new rate turns out to be.

HEALTH & SAFETY

The winter travel season in the Caribbean begins to peak this month, and so, consequently, does the season for emergency evacuations by air. There are roughly a dozen air-ambulance services based in Florida, each of them doing a brisk business (150-200 evacuations a year) in the Caribbean. According to

a spokesperson for National Air Ambulance, a company based in Fort Lauderdale, the most frequent causes of evacuation from land are moped accidents and scuba-diving injuries; the most frequent causes of evacuation from cruise ships are broken bones, heart attacks, and strokes. During the peak season National Air Ambulance employs four full-time medical and flight crews and three part-time crews. Air evacuation is usually not covered by health insurance, and it is very expensive. Evacuation from Nassau to Miami costs about \$3,500, from Montego Bay to Miami about \$5,000.



FOOD

Although Americans watch more television in February than in any other month, they nibble fewer potato chips, corn chips, and other snack foods, the consumption of which drops to its annual low (a mere 326 million pounds). The reason is probably not self-restraint. February simply lacks the kinds of occasions (the Fourth of July, Memorial Day, Christmas, televised football games) that bring families and friends together for snack-consuming frenzies. It is no coincidence that the Snack Food Association has chosen February to be National Snack Food Month, and has chosen February 16-19 as the dates for its annual convention. New Englanders lead the country in per capita snacking—by far—eating 26.7 pounds of snack food a year. The industry's weakest market is the South Atlantic region (from Maryland to Florida); there are few snack-food companies based in the region, and consequently a reduced variety of brands displayed on fewer shelves.



THE SKIES

February 2, Groundhog Day, on which we unwittingly commemorate the astronomical cross-quarter day that the ancient Celts celebrated as the festival Imbolg, when the sun is midway between the Winter Solstice and the Vernal Equinox. The medieval church Christianized this celebration, calling it Candlemas. 14, New Moon. 28, Full Moon, also known this month as the Snow, Hunger, or Trapper's Moon. All month long Jupiter rises around sunset and sets around sunrise.

50 YEARS AGO

Harold Fleming, writing in the February, 1941, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "The present fiscal situation in the United States is the most extraordinary in our history. We have been running peacetime deficits so consistently that they have become a national habit. We have embarked on a defense program which may double that rate of deficits for the indefinite future. . . . In the days of *Life With Father* nearly everybody who mattered held the notion that the national budget, like a personal or household budget, was something to keep balanced as to income and outgo. Today, however, we have grown up to—or slid down to—an entirely different idea of the first duty of the Treasury. The government has become social-minded. Protecting the needy, the unemployed, and the underemployed has come to be a first duty of government."



Great Seats Still Available for *Great Performances*



A controversial — and hilarious — look at contemporary African-American values. **February 1**

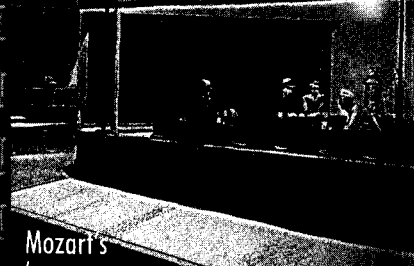
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The legendary past and the vibrant future of
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Despina's



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last opera... now
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February 22

THE
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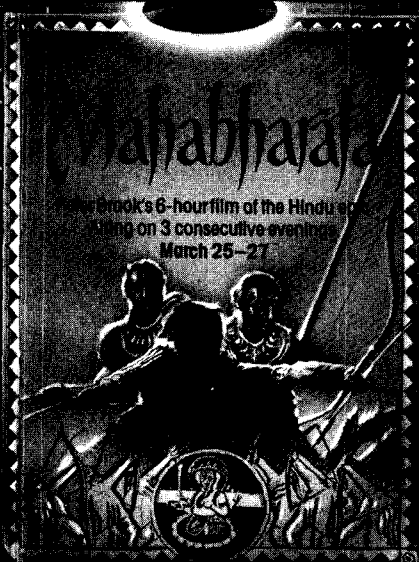


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—Lee Iacocca, Chairman and CEO,
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REPORTS & COMMENT

NOTES

Update

More on the "obviousness question" in social science

SOME MONTHS AGO in this space I made the point that much of the social-science research that gets noticed in the press—not all the research, by any means, but a lot of it—seems to trumpet conclusions that to many people would seem obvious. I went on to express gratitude that at least one branch of academic inquiry wasn't calling into question everything about life that we take for granted. The gratitude may have been premature.

It is not that in these past many weeks the volume of obvious research findings has diminished. I have a growing stack of newspaper clippings and press releases that summarize a wide variety of new and unsurprising research. "Differences are found in what disturbs men and women." "Bereaved children reported feeling more scared and less happy than their counterparts." "Most [marital] problems start after the 'honeymoon' period of the marriage is over." "Children's reaction to pain not influenced by ethnic background." "Men reported telling lies [in order to have sex] significantly more frequently than women." The studies keep getting churned out, and what I imagine to be the average person's basic view of the way the world works keeps getting confirmed.

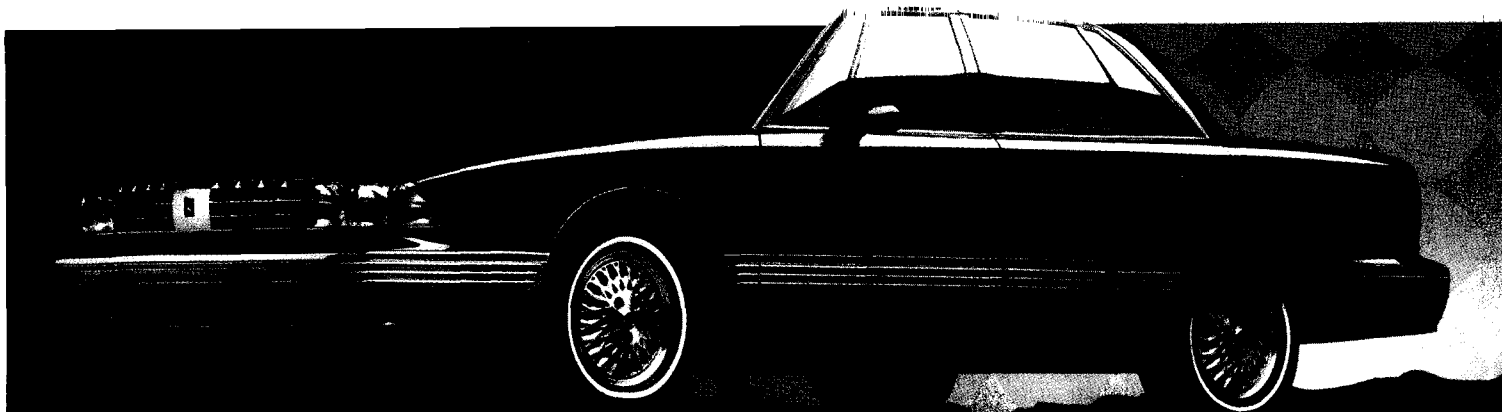
No, the problem has been with the mail. For a while, it seemed, every day brought another fat, menacing envelope, its embossed ritual markings ("Department of Psychology," "Department of Sociology") heralding another intemperate screed from someone with an advanced degree. The authors argued that a great deal of social-science research comes to conclusions that are not at all obvious; that even when the conclusions do seem obvious, the reason may be "hindsight bias" or even "self-deception"; and that uninformed criticism is of benefit to no one. In support of their contentions they cited an array of research and observed, variously, that misery doesn't necessarily love company, that opposites don't

necessarily attract, and that familiarity doesn't necessarily breed contempt. Each letter aspired to a sad, Olympian disdain that was frequently achieved and remarkable to experience. Whenever one arrived, I would immediately put down the newspaper ("Top diet tack: Eat sensibly") and get the unpleasantness over with.

ONE DAY RECENTLY what appeared to be yet another piece of invective, bearing the usual forty-five cents' worth of postage and a nervous-making cancellation mark ("Stanford, CA"), arrived in the mail. To my surprise, it turned out to be a friendly letter from a man named N. L. Gage, who is the Margaret Jacks Professor of Education (emeritus) at Stanford University. He allowed that he, too, had long been interested in what he called the "obviousness question" in social science, and he enclosed a copy of a scholarly paper, "The Obviousness of Social and Educational Research Results," which he was about to publish in a journal. He said he and I had come to "well-nigh opposite conclusions," but he thought I might enjoy his paper anyway.

Well, I did, at first. Gage begins with a remark from the 1930s attributed to the novelist James T. Farrell, in which a sociologist was defined as "someone who will spend \$10,000 to find the location of the nearest house of ill fame." He quotes James B. Conant, the longtime president of Harvard University, who in the 1950s characterized much social science as consisting of "for the most part highly limited and unsystematized generalizations,





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which are the stock in trade of everyday life for all sane people." Gage retails similar criticisms by other estimable thinkers up through the mid-1980s, and admits, by way of summary: "These opinions are hard to ignore."

But then he asks, in effect: What is meant by "obvious"? Does the charge that a proposition is obvious even have a useful meaning? Gage cites a doctoral dissertation written by a Stanford student, Daphna Baratz, who took sixteen actual social-science propositions—for example, "People who go to church regularly tend to have more children than people who go to church infrequently"; "Single women express more distress over their unmarried status than single men do"—and asked a group of some forty Stanford undergraduates to indicate, using a numbered scale, just how obvious each proposition was. She also told them that each statement was true (though in fact only half of them were). Baratz then gathered a second group of forty Stanford undergraduates, presented them with the *opposite* of those sixteen propositions, told them that the statements were true, and asked them to rate the statements for obviousness. As you will perhaps have anticipated, the true and false findings were deemed by the two groups of students to be just about equally obvious. This experiment was extended and confirmed by another Stanford doctoral candidate, Lily Wong, in 1987. "From the work of Baratz and Wong," Gage writes, "we can conclude that the feeling that a research result is obvious is untrustworthy."

The tendency of people to regard as obvious *any* research finding they happen to read about is, Gage admits, only a tendency. And some research findings are certainly both very true and truly obvious. It is disconcerting, though, to have the notion of obviousness, of all things, called into question, and Gage's proposal for a fresh research effort that will focus on obviousness—who knows what will turn up?—is an additional cause for alarm. Gage himself does not seem to be especially worried about just how far the concept of obviousness will ultimately unravel: "Most adults' generalizations about human interactions," he points out in his paper, "are at least functional." Let us hope that that generalization, too, is functional.

—Cullen Murphy

DANNI BARNEA



On Saudi television a master of insult has his say

THE MIDDLE EAST

Curses in Verses

Unusual fighting words

UNBEKNOWN to most people living outside the Persian Gulf region, a war has raged there ever since the Iraqi ruler, Saddam Hussein, dispatched his forces to overrun Kuwait last August. But rather than a conventional hot war, fought with tanks, missiles, and planes, it's an odd propaganda contest, in which the two Arab camps trade insults over the airwaves in archaic language, following strict rules, and in rhyme.

The essence of this phenomenon is not altogether unfamiliar. Readers of the Bible will recall the scenes in which, on the brink of battle, warriors loudly reviled their enemies and flaunted their own prowess. "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?" Goliath growled upon first setting eyes on David; then, for good measure, he "cursed David by his gods." In an earlier era, when the Children of Israel were camped on the plains of Moab, the terrified Moabite

king summoned Balaam, a warlock of some repute, and begged him to "curse me this people . . . that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed." That Balaam then accomplished the opposite of his mandate is another matter; what interests us here is the magical power of the imprecation delivered in rhyme—or, to be more precise, the enviable ability to curse in verse.

Thus an ancient Semitic tradition lives on in the culture of Bedouin Arab societies to our very day. For centuries the most adored poets in the canon of Arabic literature have been not the writers of love poems (though there has been no lack of these) but rhymesters like Ta'abatta Sharran (loosely, "He Who Carried a Snake Under His Arm"), who in the sixth century won this colorful epithet with his flair for offense, insult, and scathing doses of verbal venom. He was not alone. In fact, a whole gallery of ancient poets who specialized in the art of cursing and blessing are known to every Arab schoolchild. In a sense these men were the literary ancestors of the wandering troubadours, minstrels of malediction who had been cast out of their tribes and roamed among the courts of the local princes, declaiming their odes in a bid for patronage while subtly threat-



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ening to turn their praise into censure if they failed to win a lord's favors.

The rhymed pronouncements of these ancient bards—a highly developed genre known as *hija'*, or execration poetry—were written in a handful of formats with meters and rhyme schemes as rigid as those of a Shakespearean sonnet (neither of which the translations given here attempt to approximate). Strict rules also dictated the order of the narrative. In its classical form, for example, *hija'* poetry always begins with a barrage of boasting. One typical and famous opening reads, "Oh, I am the man whose honor has never been soiled, / And each robe I wear is exquisite." After a few stanzas the poem gets down to the business of vilification. "Lower your eyes, for you come from the tribe of Numire / And will never attain the stature of Kilab" is its warm-up to a stream of abuse.

The entire corpus of *hija'* poetry dates from the pre-Islamic era, which Muslims refer to as the *Jahiliya*, or Age of Ignorance, a term they have come to use as a metaphor for anything crass or

boorish in Arab discourse or behavior. After the invasion of Kuwait, however, the peoples in the confrontation states reached back to their earliest cultural roots for a form that would serve their needs. The result is the revival of *hija'*. For hours on end, without a single commercial for relief, Saudi, Iraqi, and Kuwaiti television (in exile) broadcast readings by a curious collection of poets whose métier is the highly stylized put-down. Like Balaam, they have been summoned to curse in rhyme, and their repertory is the *pièce de résistance* of the propaganda feast served up by the media each day.

WESTERN OBSERVERS have paid little if any attention to this piquant aspect of the Gulf crisis, for a very simple reason: it takes a mastery of medieval Arabic to decipher these poems, especially because one of the basic rules of modern *hija'* is to employ words and metaphors that have been out of use for centuries. Even Western scholars who have spent a lifetime steeped in the language can bare-

ly muddle through these texts—and then only by constant reference to a dictionary. They also face the problem of ambiguity, for many of the lines can be interpreted in various, and sometimes opposite, ways.

Westerners are not the only ones who have trouble following the daily readings. Most of the Arab consumers of these broadcasts, on both sides of the Kuwaiti border, are unable to appreciate the literal meaning of the poems, to say nothing of the stabs at wordplay. Imagine Lord Haw-Haw spouting doggerel in Chaucerian English—to draw an imperfect parallel—and you get a sense of how these verses are received on a literal level. As such, they appear to violate the first law of propaganda: that it be simple, straightforward, and easy to absorb. Yet on a deeper level the message of the poems comes through, as the audience responds almost viscerally to their rhythms, cadence, and melodies, which conjure up a whole world of heroic associations from the glorious past. Trust both Saddam Hussein and King

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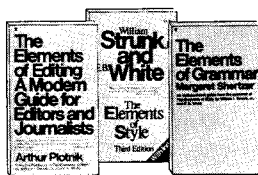
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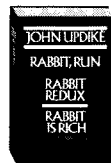
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Fahd to know their constituents. Despite their recourse to modern rhetoric as part of their outward adoption of twentieth-century ideologies and values—socialism in the case of Saddam, welfare in the case of Fahd—when war looms large, they revert to the ancient formulas that strike deep chords in Arab audiences. Just as preachers of the fire-and-brimstone variety retain the ability to chill lapsed churchgoers who thought they had put old-style religion behind them, so these latter-day Balaams have a mesmerizing effect even when their listeners do not fully comprehend them.

One sign of the great response is that the *hija'* revival has prompted a musical revival alongside it. The *rabab*, a kind of primeval guitar, has been tracked down in museums, dusted off, and brought to the television studios to provide accompaniment. Shriveled old geezers from half-forgotten tribes—the only people who still know how to play the instrument—have become television celebrities overnight. But the *hija'* programs serve as far more

than popular entertainment. Besides having helped audiences to psych up for a shooting war, they have provided channels for a kind of offbeat diplomacy by which more messages are transmitted across the lines than through conventional diplomatic means. Ups and downs in the progress of the crisis can often be better discerned by forgoing the regular news broadcasts, tuning in to these “para-news” programs, and gauging the mood by the strength of the vitriol or by a shift from mocking the enemy’s leaders to exalting one’s own. Saddam Hussein and King Fahd are said to have received daily summaries and “intelligence assessments” of what the other side’s bards have to say.

MORE OFTEN than not, what they’re saying is downright vicious. The poems treat a number of themes, but their rancor is usually aimed directly at the other side’s leader, and Saddam Hussein is often addressed by name. Every possible negative trait and contemptible deed is ascribed to him, but above all

he is berated for being a bad neighbor, attacking by stealth at night, and forgetting past favors—all gross violations of the old Bedouin ethic. One Saudi rhymester took him to task for his sheer ingratitude:

O Saddam who repudiates old favors,
You cried out and your people we saved.
When Iran was ensconced on your soil,
You came begging to us for our aid.

Other popular themes touch on associations with the non-Arab players in the Gulf drama. Not surprisingly, the American troops stationed in the peninsula often feature in the exchanges of verbal artillery going on over their heads, and the women soldiers are a favorite subject in the poets’ fulminations. The Iraqis have broadcast any number of verses sneering at King Fahd for hiding behind their skirts—a variation on a classic motif in ancient Arabic verse, and probably the most degrading portrayal of the Arab male.

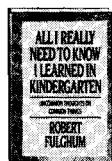
Not to be outdone, the Saudis have



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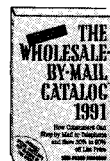
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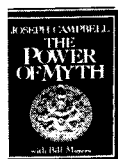
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hit back with the ultimate insult: denouncing Saddam as a Jew! A Saudi bard thundered into the microphone like the voice of doom:

Saddam, O Saddam,
Of our flesh not are you.
Claim not to be a Muslim,
For you are truly a Jew.
Your deeds have proved ugly,
Your face is darkest black,
And we will yet set fire
To your bottom and your back.

A mark of the genre's great appeal is that the recitation of *hija'* has extended beyond the media to the barracks. Hardly a single Saudi army or national-guard parade takes place these days without several amateur poets' being

one round of this contest a young Iraqi trounced his rivals with a single obscure but evidently dazzling couplet: "Your braves have all been killed, O rue. / Even the rooster laughs at you."

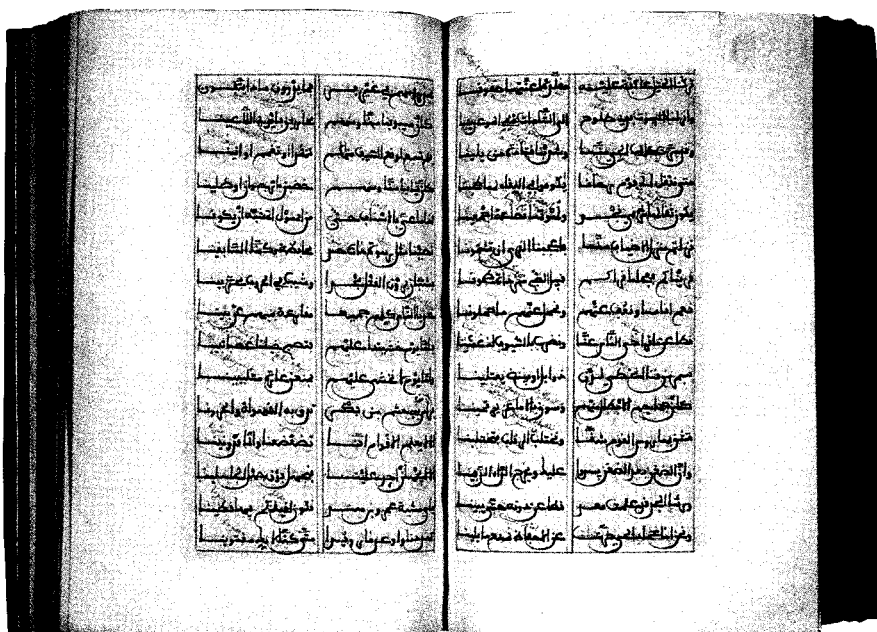
In addition to meting out its fair share of insults, Iraqi state television parries the swipes at President Hussein with a special program called *Saddam in the Conscience of the Poets*. Night after night it presents selected photographs from Saddam Hussein's family album along with a fresh ode to the revered leader. One of the President's biographers recently claimed that for quite a while Saddam, a deeply modest man, was reluctant to let this program go on the air. But in fact the personality cult

IN FOLLOWING this war of rhymes, Arab audiences not only understand the cultural codes built into the poetry but are keenly aware of historical precedents, especially the fact that warfare has actually been averted when antagonists have vented their aggression in verse. Although the curse-and-bless prelude was originally designed to gear enemies up for an armed clash, it has also had the effect of substituting for physical combat. And given the possibility that the trading of gibes could turn out to be the full extent of a war, the question of who is better at it takes on considerable importance. Whose barbs have been more devastating? Whose poets have produced more quotable quotes? These questions occupy Arab viewers almost as much as the issue of who enjoys better odds on the battlefield, and few will deny that the Saudis are winning the verbal war hands down. Because their educational curriculum has helped to preserve tribal traditions, especially in rural areas, the Saudis' rhymes have a more authentic and resonant quality, whereas the Iraqis are handicapped by the pseudo-Marxist indoctrination of the ruling Baath Party, which has warped their native sensibility. Aware that they are trailing, the Iraqis have called in reinforcements in the form of Yemeni tribesmen from remote mountain regions, Egyptians from the *Gastarbeiter* community in Baghdad, and an array of political exiles—Palestinians and others—who have flocked to Saddam's banner.

Whether or not this strategy will turn the tide of battle remains to be seen. Either way, the consumers of these rhymed diatribes know another thing of which the non-Arab members of the anti-Iraq coalition should perhaps take note. In the *hija'* tradition the switch from cursing to blessing, from biting a hand to kissing it, can be made swiftly, almost abruptly, without any loss of face. The poet who heaps invective upon an enemy today can ooze unction on him tomorrow. Such prudent agility, like the slithering of the snake carried under his arm, is one of the rules set down by the master of *hija'*, Ta'abata Sharan. Arabs applaud it as the epitome of finesse; Westerners can be forgiven for regarding it as something entirely different.

—Ehud Ya'ari and
Ina Friedman

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Boasting and belittling: a volume of pre-Islamic execration poetry

called to the microphone to deliver examples of their artistic efforts. A Saudi colonel is rumored to have earned a special bonus for the following variation on an ancient verse:

We hear the barking of the dogs
But we are not afraid,
Tomorrow the cur will fight the
hand
That fed it yesterday.
Not out of Zion's halls have come
The "Zionists" who defile our sons.
March on the tyrant's horde we
must
And grind it down to grains of dust.

The Iraqi army has a regular contest going to find the soldier who can quote the most, and the most accurately, from the corpus of classical *hija'*. In

has reached new heights in Iraq, far surpassing even the excesses of Stalin's day. A typical example of the near-idolatry that goes along with the nightly display of family photos reads,

Two faces have you, fore and aft.
To a friend you are a savory draught,
To the enemy agony and doom.
O'er the desert like God's spirit you
loom,
Breathing life into the barren sand,
Awakening the heavens, inflaming
the land.
You were created to fill the earth
with awe,
Take the bow up, its string to draw.
Your wisdom brings remedy, your
balm is pure,
The ailing await you—and blood is
the cure.

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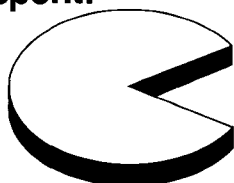
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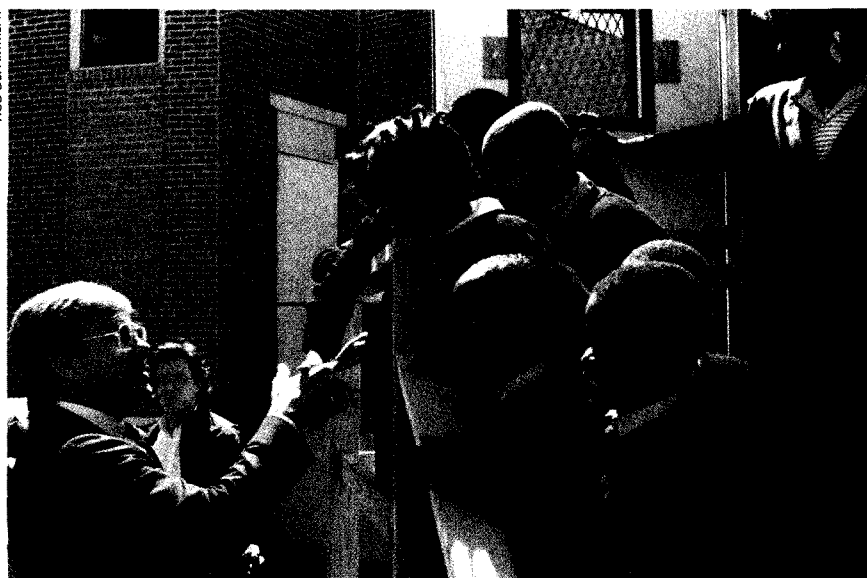
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Jack Kemp: the latest politician to promise a hand up, not a handout

WASHINGTON

Fighting the Last War

Spurred by Jack Kemp, the Bush Administration is preparing to launch a new war on poverty. So far it looks quite a bit like the old one

THE WAR ON POVERTY may turn out to have been more important historically for the political reaction it provoked than for what it actually did. The agency created to carry out the War on Poverty, the Office of Economic Opportunity, was fairly small, modestly funded (its highest-ever annual budget was \$1.9 billion—under Richard Nixon), and short-lived (it existed for barely a decade). Nevertheless, politicians have been running against the War on Poverty almost from the moment it began. The year that Lyndon Johnson started the War on Poverty, 1964, was also the year that Ronald Reagan emerged as a national politician, because of his speechmaking in Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign; Reagan attacked the War on Poverty then, and he's still attacking it now. In his recently published memoirs Reagan describes his vehement objection to the War on Poverty as having been one of

the main things on his mind as he was deciding whether or not to run for President. "Hundreds of billions were spent on poverty programs, and the plight of the poor grew more painful," he writes. "They had spent billions on programs that made people worse off."

Oddly, though, there is now a movement to declare war on poverty again. Its leader is Jack Kemp, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. After he dropped out of the 1988 presidential race, Kemp began calling for a "conservative war on poverty." During the press conference at which his appointment to HUD was announced, Kemp said, "I told my friends on Capitol Hill, both Democrat and Republican alike, I want to wage war on poverty." Last fall, after some spirited politicking inside the Administration, President Bush put Kemp in charge of an Economic Empowerment Task Force, which is supposed to formulate a new federal anti-poverty policy.

It appears now that the historical importance of the Bush Administration's war on poverty will also not lie in what it actually does. It probably won't receive from the President either the rhetorical commitment or the significant new budget authority that the original version got from Johnson. But it does provide a way of gauging the stance of the Republican Party—the presidential party, and so the likely source of major government initiatives—on social-welfare issues. During the period after Bush appointed the Economic Empowerment Task Force and before

its first official meeting, I spoke with all its leading figures. I was struck by the extent to which these conservatives, determined to avoid the mistakes of a liberal program that in their view failed miserably, were reliving with an almost eerie exactitude the early machinations that preceded the War on Poverty.

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT flurry of social-policy making in the Reagan Administration came at the very beginning, in the form of David Stockman's cuts in federal spending on domestic programs. Stockman's great cause—a failed one, as it turned out—was eliminating what he called "the social pork barrel," a system under which government money was distributed according to the political power of the beneficiaries rather than need. After Stockman, the best-known conservative in the field of social policy during the 1980s was probably Charles Murray, the author of the book *Losing Ground*, who argued that social programs, especially welfare, had caused poverty to increase, and so should be eliminated.

Although this was similar to the view of poverty programs that Reagan has expressed throughout his career, Murray had very little discernible influence on the Reagan Administration—there was no attempt to dismantle the welfare state after *Losing Ground* was published—and, of course, neither did Stockman after the first year. Instead, Reagan surrounded himself with a group of people who had worked for him when he was governor of California, whose guiding principle was that the federal government shouldn't "micro-manage" social-welfare policy: it should hold overall spending down and let the states decide what to do. The California group might have agreed with Stockman's and Murray's views, but to them it was far more important to limit the power of the federal government than to make it operate according to conservative principles.

For most of Reagan's second term a man named Charles Hobbs, who had worked for Reagan in Sacramento in the early 1970s, was the member of the White House staff in charge of social policy. Hobbs's dream was to persuade Congress to pass a bill that would give the states power to experiment with welfare programs. In 1986 the bill was

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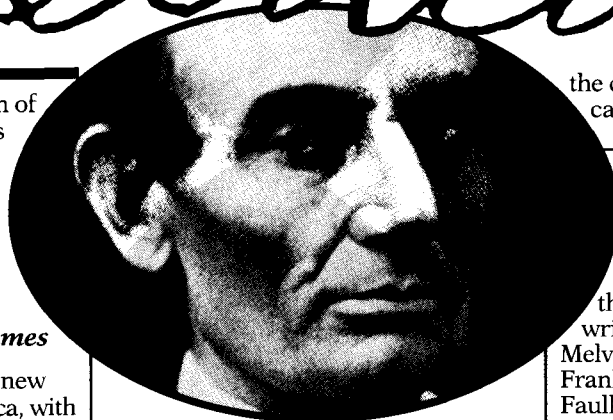
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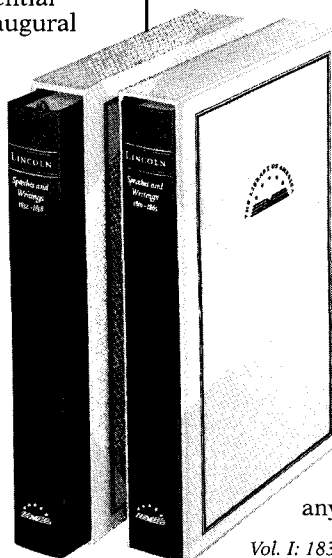
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killed in committee, and Hobbs was forced to accept a pale substitute—an organization inside the White House called the Low Income Opportunity Board, which encouraged the states to apply for waivers from federal rules so that they could institute their own welfare-reform plans. Almost half the states participated, but most of their plans were, as Hobbs told me recently, “incremental,” not revisions of the welfare system. He continued, “To tell the truth, I had to sit and bite my tongue for two years because I thought they were being too timid.”

When Bush took office, having signaled for months that he would display more compassion toward the poor than Reagan had, he decided to keep the Low Income Opportunity Board going. Hobbs left the White House in the spring of 1989, and another member of the White House staff, William Roper, who had many other responsibilities, took over responsibility for the board. In September of 1989 Bush asked it to develop, in the words of a White House memo, “the principles of a conservative anti-poverty agenda.” The board began to hold monthly meetings, attended mostly by second-level officials of the domestic Cabinet departments, to discuss ideas. To judge from the paperwork generated by the board, the main new initiative it discussed was what one memo calls “large-scale community intervention in high poverty areas,” which sounds a lot like the main new initiative of the War on Poverty, the community-action program.

Last spring William Roper left the White House, and authority over the board passed to a member of the Council of Economic Advisers. The impression that Bush wasn’t doing much to bring into being a “kinder and gentler nation” was sharply underscored by a story by Robert Pear that appeared on the front page of *The New York Times* on July 6, 1990, under the headline “WHITE HOUSE SPURNS EXPANSION OF NATION’S ANTI-POVERTY EFFORTS.” After describing the failure of the Low Income Opportunity Board to come up with anything that the Domestic Policy Council, the group of Cabinet members it reported to, would approve, Pear wrote, “A White House official summarized the upshot this way: ‘Keep playing with the same toys. But let’s paint them a little shinier.’”

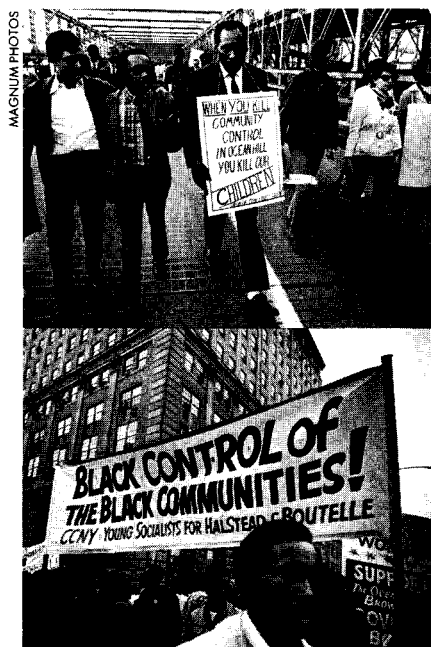
Kemp was already rankled by the mood of caution that prevailed in the Domestic Policy Council. He had long since personally declared war on poverty, but there was no visible Administration-wide effort to show for it. He had privately urged Bush and John Sununu, the White House chief of staff, to make “war on poverty” a presidential catchphrase, but they refused, not wanting to imply that they were going to create big new government programs. (Finally, Bush did slip a war-on-poverty reference into a speech.) The meetings of the Domestic Policy Council “went poorly for Secretary Kemp,” says Thomas Humbert, one of his aides at HUD. “He wanted to start immediately with the new war on poverty. He had the themes and designs. That was turned down.” Other Cabinet secretaries told Kemp that if the Administration publicly raised poverty as an issue, it would only help the Democrats. On May 25, 1990, Kemp expressed his reaction to the proceedings of the Domestic Policy Council in a letter to Richard Thornburgh, the Attorney General, who is its chairman. “I am absolutely convinced that we are at a moment of critical mass,” he wrote. “It is past time for the Administration to aggressively highlight a new comprehensive anti-poverty agenda. . . .”

The *New York Times* story was based on a memo drafted for the Domestic Policy Council, sketching out a series

of non-actions such as expanding the Low Income Opportunity Board and further studying federal anti-poverty programs. This memo was not at all what Kemp and his aides had in mind. “This is awful!” one of them wrote in the margin of a copy. The *Times* story gave them an opening. Kemp was in London when it appeared; he immediately called the White House to complain, and was assured that no decision had been made to drop the idea of an anti-poverty offensive. When he got back to Washington, he wrote Thornburgh another testy letter, suggesting that a Cabinet member be put in charge of the anti-poverty effort, and warning that unless the effort was juiced up, there would be more bad publicity. “The Administration has already been criticized in the press for studying the problem to death and throwing up its hands,” he wrote. “Here we are asking the President to endorse a war on poverty that will produce, in a year’s time, a report, an analysis, and, perhaps, some proposals. Meanwhile, what’s going on in our neighborhoods and on the streets?”

Evidently Kemp’s views won out. By the beginning of September the Low Income Opportunity Board had quietly slipped beneath the waves. Bush had approved the establishment of the Economic Empowerment Task Force as a replacement body, with a Cabinet secretary as its head, and Kemp had beaten out the secretaries of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services to get the job. There was a lot going on here. To use one of Kemp’s favorite locutions, it’s no secret that Jack Kemp has presidential ambitions. He was known to have become restless at HUD. Being assigned to run the task force, a job Kemp sees as highly visible and demanding, keeps him on the reservation.

Inside the White House there was some desire to prove the *Times* story wrong—to counter, for reasons of election-year political expediency and East Coast Republican gentility, the perception that the Bush Administration didn’t care about the poor. In particular, a White House aide named James Pinkerton, who is in charge of trying to shore up Bush as regards what the President calls “the vision thing,” became involved in anti-poverty policy after the story. Pinkerton, who is the



Scenes from the first war

son of two liberal academics, cuts a figure in Washington today a little like that of Stockman in the late 1970s, or of Representative Newt Gingrich in the early 1980s: he is a young intellectual convert to conservatism who wants to create for the Republican Party an overarching concept so compelling that it will remake American politics as completely as the New Deal did. Pinkerton calls his concept the New Paradigm. Its essential tenet is that bureaucracy is a spent force in the world and is being replaced by decentralized, market-driven forms of organization. Last spring Bush gave a speech about the New Paradigm.

In lobbying for the Economic Empowerment Task Force, Pinkerton joined with two White House aides who have more-conventional responsibilities in the management of domestic policy, Charles Kolb and Richard Porter. A new anti-poverty initiative appealed to Pinkerton as a chance to kill two birds with one stone. It could help draw below-median-income voters into the Republican Party and also be a proving ground for the New Paradigm, by supporting anti-bureaucratic poverty-fighting ideas like school and housing vouchers and tax-free "enterprise zones" in urban slums. Although the task force has members from throughout the government, the two key clusters of people involved in it are the group on the White House staff and Kemp and his circle of advisers at HUD—all of whom are uninterested in the Reagan Administration cause of getting the federal government out of social-policy making. Kemp is strongly committed to using the federal government as an instrument of social-policy making, because he believes that the solution to most of the country's problems lies in changing the income-tax code in various ways, which state and local governments can't do.

THE WORD "empowerment" conjures up visions of SDS manifestos, campus demonstrations, the Black Power movement—all the things the Republican Party ran against so successfully for so many years. But now it is the mantra of the Bush Administration regarding poverty. That a catchphrase of the left could have mutated into a catchphrase of the right is only one of many examples of the way in which discussions of poverty and



Robert Kennedy: still the model for an ambitious poverty warrior

race in America tend to encourage elaborate rhetorical posturing.

All the essential actors in the formation of the Economic Empowerment Task Force make it clear that inner-city black ghettos are their central concern; they don't talk much about Appalachian hollows or shantytowns along the Mexican border. Even to raise as a possibility new government programs aimed at the ghettos runs the risk of offending two constituencies: blacks, who might feel they are being colonialized and treated as deficient, and conservative members of Congress, who aren't inclined to support new social-welfare spending. "Empowerment" neatly evades both problems.

For many blacks the word has a resonance it simply lacks for most whites. The standard white-ethnic mythology of intergenerational progress from the slums to the suburbs doesn't include anyone's having become empowered, but African-American history and psychology is bound up with the idea of throwing off the bonds of oppression and powerlessness. Robert Woodson, a black conservative who runs the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, a think tank, is the person most responsible for popularizing the word "empowerment" in conservative circles. Many of the white conservatives who use it (like Kemp, who keeps a bust of Lincoln on his desk at HUD) believe that the Republican Party can attract a substantial black constituency. The social-welfare consensus of the early sixties foundered on the charge

that white officialdom's attitude toward the ghettos consisted of "blaming the victim," and the fear of appearing to victim-blame has haunted social-policy makers ever since. The Economic Empowerment Task Force is determined to avoid this problem, even if that means explaining itself in language that will seem esoteric to most whites. James Pinkerton says, "People like me don't need to be empowered. The black in the ghetto has to be empowered. If it means nothing to ninety percent of the American people, so be it."

"Empowerment" sends a different signal to the conservative audience. It implies that the ghetto poor are going to be encouraged to solve their own problems, rather than to become wards of the state—and therefore that the spending is going to be modest. Also, conservatives are intensely aware that there are two main strains in modern conservatism, one extremely unpopular with voters, the other extremely popular. The unpopular strain is austere, pessimistic about human nature and the wisdom of the public's will, and prone to viewing government as a bulwark against disorder, rather than as a solver of all the world's problems. The popular strain—Reagan's strain, and also Kemp's—is anti-establishment, ebulliently optimistic, and full of trust in the common man. The Economic Empowerment Task Force will be firmly in this camp, whose catechism is that the American ghettos, Eastern Europe, and the poorer parts of Latin America have an essential

MAGNUM PHOTOS



similarity: all are places where the heavy hand of the state has prevented the basic abilities of people from showing themselves. Pinkerton talks about the need for *perestroika* in the ghettos. Stuart Butler, the chief poverty expert at the Heritage Foundation (which was Kemp's resting place, briefly, before he got the HUD job), uses the slogan "Trust people, mistrust bureaucracy."

Sometimes, in conversation, some of these conservatives hint that government might play some role in the lives of the poor other than simply getting out of the way. Joseph Schiff, the assistant secretary of HUD in charge of public housing, who spent the late 1980s running HUD's Louisville office and so was not in close touch with the conservative think tanks in Washington as they developed the new line, told me that he wants to provide public-housing tenants with a range of special social services. When I asked him how this constituted empowerment, he seemed momentarily flustered, and then got with the program and said that the kinds of social services he had in mind were different from "traditional social work, which as I understand it is more welfare." Kemp's aide Thomas Humbert told me, "There is another side to the story we don't have the authority to do—preaching values. Conservatives don't do that well. Jesse Jackson does it well. A sense of, 'You can do it, you can make it, the dream's alive, keep your family together,' and so on. But that's not Secretary Kemp's role—he's a white suburbanite who grew up middle class." Practically speaking, there is quite often a blurring of the intellectual distinction between programs that empower and programs that acculturate; job training, for example, could be put under either rubric. But in the stance it strikes for purposes of Washington debate, the Bush Administration is completely for the former and against the latter.

THE ECONOMIC Empowerment Task Force didn't meet for the first time until November 15, so it is still in the early stage of its deliberations—the stage at which domestic agencies and departments are asked to submit poverty-fighting ideas. It is not difficult to guess what the end result will be, though. The task force is under instructions to be "budget-neu-

tral," so it has to propose a rearrangement of, rather than an increase in, government spending. Charles Kolb, the White House aide who actually runs the task force, insists that money for new programs can be found by eliminating the waste in old ones. "The gross dollars are enormous," he says. "The money's getting raked off somewhere." It usually turns out that what appears to be waste is actually payroll or benefits, which are very difficult to cut, so it's unlikely that the conservative war on poverty will be budgetarily substantial. Both Kemp and Kolb say, too, that the task force probably won't propose a major piece of legislation along the lines of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, because the Administration doesn't trust Congress. As Stuart Butler puts it, by submitting legislation "you lose control and get into a bidding war."

Whatever the task force does propose will probably be some version of Kemp's poverty-fighting agenda, on which the key items are substantial tax cuts for the working poor, tenant management of housing projects, housing and education vouchers, and enterprise zones, all of which fit comfortably under the rubric of empowerment. Like Reagan, Kemp is drawn more to anecdotes than to statistics. Overall, the ghettos have been tremendous population-losers over the past two decades, but Kemp has a circle of community-leader acquaintances, most of them middle-aged black women, whose success at turning around their neighborhoods has convinced him that all ghettos can be made into thriving, crime-free ethnic neighborhoods through the application of economic incentives by the government. It is difficult to imagine that when the Economic Empowerment Task Force goes public, Kemp won't extol the good works of Kimi Gray in Washington and Bertha Gilkey in East St. Louis and call for a nationwide application of their ideas, since he does so in almost every speech he gives.

The impolite question to ask about Kemp's uplifting vision is whether the intellectual foundation on which it rests—that all the problems of the ghettos were created by liberal government programs that began in the mid-1960s—is plausible. Kemp himself, when pressed on this point, is willing to concede that all was not well in the

ghettos even before the War on Poverty began, and that many blacks have been helped by government programs since then. The true-believer conservative position on the War on Poverty can be more readily found in the writings of Stuart Butler, who is close to Kemp. He has written that the War on Poverty committed three crucial errors: first, "policymaking was centralized in Washington"; second, "the idea of 'welfare rights' guided many programs"; and third, "the War on Poverty assumed that the best way to help people was to send trained professionals into communities to help the poor." The White House memorandum that led to the creation of the Economic Empowerment Task Force subscribes to the Butler theory. It says, for example, "Although it alleviated some of the worst *symptoms* of poverty, the war on poverty could not succeed in *reducing* poverty because it was based on a philosophy of redistributionism and promoted dependency."

Actually, none of these charges against the War on Poverty is true. Rather than being centralized in Washington, the War on Poverty had as its biggest program community action, which was carried out by quasi-independent organizations in poor neighborhoods. Rather than promoting welfare, the War on Poverty explicitly rejected it, in part because Lyndon Johnson hated the idea of government handouts. (It was the Nixon Administration that made increasing cash and in-kind assistance to the poor the centerpiece of its anti-poverty policy.) And rather than relying on what conservatives now call "the service-provider industry," the War on Poverty went to some lengths to shut it out; the community-action program was supposed to be substantially staffed by poor people rather than social workers. Some of the slogans now being discussed in the Administration—for example, "a hand up, not a handout"—were used in the War on Poverty. Whatever the failures of the War on Poverty now appear to have been, most of its political troubles at the time stemmed from its heavy reliance on ghetto community-development groups, which tended to get a bad press and to engender the enmity of conventional elected politicians, who thought that federal anti-poverty money should be spent through them.

THE MORE INTERESTING conclusion to draw from a comparison of the two wars on poverty is that their similarities bespeak some fundamental truth about social-welfare-policy making in America. The Bush Administration's war on poverty is now where the War on Poverty was in the early fall of 1963. That was the last time until now that the White House was occupied by the son of a wealthy and prominent father, a graduate of an Ivy League college, and a Navy combat veteran of the Second World War; in keeping with his background, that President, like this one, was primarily interested in foreign affairs. John F. Kennedy was being pushed toward poverty-fighting by an ambitious Cabinet member who had developed a strong interest in the black ghettos and who had formulated his own daring agenda for solving their problems—his brother Robert. Bush is being pushed by Kemp. The impetus for the explorations of anti-poverty policy in 1963 was that Kennedy was proposing an income-tax cut and was

worried that he would appear unfair if he didn't also do something for the poor; Kemp and Bush have both been drawn first to tax-cutting and then to anti-poverty policy, as a way of providing balance.

The War on Poverty began with the convening of an interagency task force like the Economic Empowerment Task Force. This proved to be a cumbersome vehicle for policy-making, and most of its time was taken up in squabbling among Cabinet departments. (In the Bush Administration the squabbling began, very publicly, the day after the first meeting of the task force, when Richard Darman, the budget director, gave a speech making fun of the New Paradigm, which infuriated Kemp and Pinkerton.) Eventually the poverty-fighters, desperate to cut through the bureaucracy and find a fresh new idea that didn't cost too much, settled on trying to revive the ghettos by "empowering" their residents. That will probably be the outcome this time around, too, only the empowerment will be economic rather than political.

Had John Kennedy not been assassinated, the War on Poverty would never have been declared. If Bush's presidency proceeds pretty much as it has so far, there is little likelihood that Bush will make any vast Johnson-style promise to eliminate ghetto poverty either. That would be more in Jack Kemp's line. It appears that the natural, ordinary operations of the federal government do not encourage major reforms in race relations. Instead, normal procedure in centrist administrations is for the existence of obvious racial problems to produce some pangs of conscience or duty, which are followed by a search for a course of action that won't be very expensive or disruptive. Breakthroughs in the area of race, the most difficult issue in American domestic life, have in the past been wrenching experiences for the whole society. That is why they have been associated with times of national crisis and Presidents of immoderate temperament—not times like these, or Presidents like this one.

—Nicholas Lemann



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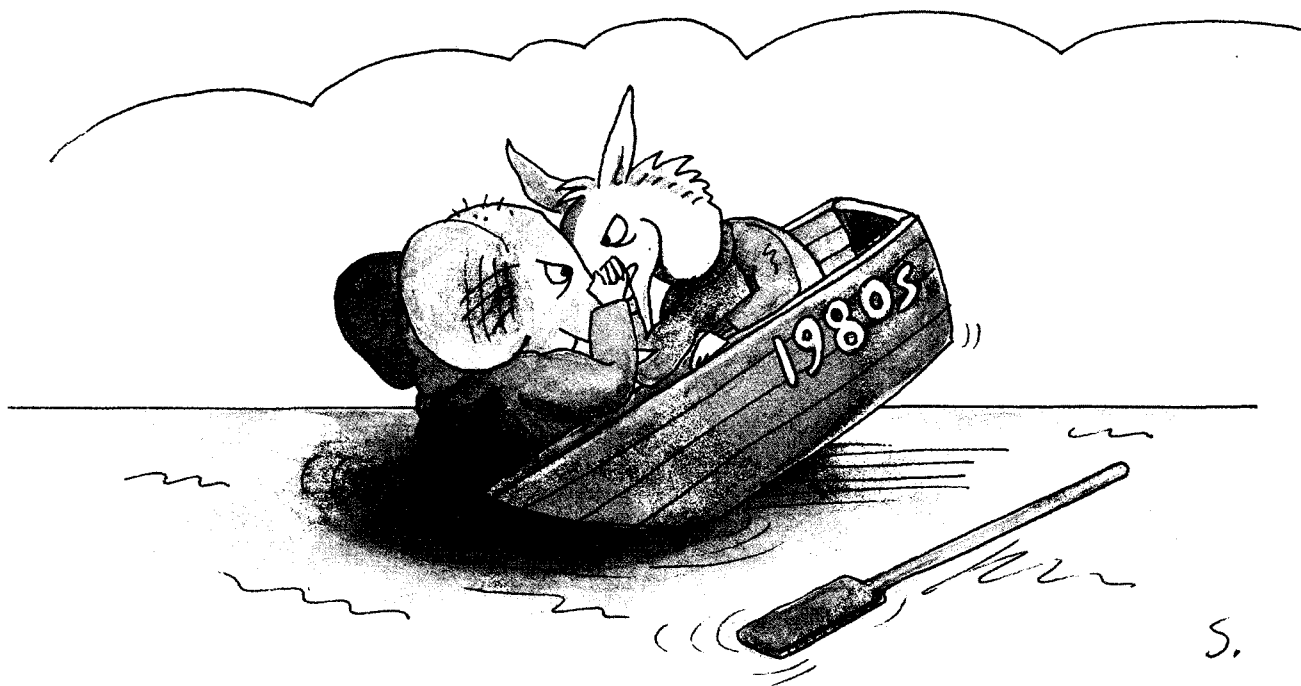


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The Republicans say that the key to a strong economy is money in the hands of rich investors. The Democrats say that we must redistribute money from the rich to entitlement programs for the poor and middle class. According to the author, neither model is adequate to the economy of the 1990s and beyond—a world economy in which the true sources of national wealth are the accrued skills of the work force and the quality of the social and material infrastructure supporting them

THE REAL ECONOMY

BY ROBERT B. REICH



THE CENTRAL TENET OF REPUBLICAN ECONOMICS is that everyone benefits when the rich are allowed to keep more of their income for themselves. Ronald Reagan believed that the benefits of the 1981 tax cut for wealthy Americans would “trickle down” to everyone else. For most of his presidency thus far George Bush has claimed that a lower tax on capital gains (which would benefit the wealthy, who own most of the nation’s capital assets) would give a surge of momentum to the economy, and thus help all of us. In contrast, the central tenet of Democratic economics is that this allocation of the tax burden isn’t fair. Taxes on the wealthy should be raised, and government should spread the wealth directly, through a myriad of social programs.

The two sides were at a stalemate throughout the

1980s. Taxes on the wealthy stayed low *and* entitlements stayed high (while military expenditures grew), with the result that the federal budget ballooned. In last year’s budget agreement both sides conceded a bit: taxes on the rich will rise somewhat (but not anywhere near as high as they were in the late 1970s), and entitlement programs will grow when there is money to finance them. But underlying the compromise—which is more like a truce in an ongoing war—the same choice remains: growth or fairness, private investment or public spending, tax cuts for the rich or entitlements for everyone else. In this contest Republicans continue to represent the brute force of American capitalism, Democrats the softer and more generous side of our natures.

But this isn’t the real choice facing Americans as we approach the twenty-first century, and it creates a false pic-

Increasingly, educated brainpower—
along with the roads, airports, computers, and
fiber-optic cables linking it up—determines
a nation's standard of living.

ture of where the economy is heading and what must be done. Republican economics is wrong: The success of American capitalism no longer depends on the private investments of highly motivated American capitalists. Our nation's future economic success depends instead on our unique attributes—the skills and insights of our work force, and how well we link those skills and insights to the world economy. The Democratic rejoinder is equally wrongheaded: The government's role is not just to spread the wealth. It is to build our human capital and infrastructure, and to bargain with global capital on our behalf. To prepare us for twenty-first-century capitalism, American economic policy must be adapted to the new realities of the world economy.

Global Capital

AGAIN, REPUBLICANS HAVE IT WRONG. THE INVESTMENTS of wealthier Americans (who have the wherewithal to save and invest) no longer trickle down to the rest of the American population. Instead, they trickle out to wherever on the globe the best returns can be had. The savings of foreigners, meanwhile, trickle in to find promising projects within the United States. Foreign investments in America rose to a record \$2 trillion in 1989, up 12 percent from the year before. Since 1980 foreign capital investment in the United States has increased fourfold. Capital—in the form of loans, shares of stock, and corporate factories, equipment, and research laboratories—moves around the world with scant respect for national boundaries.

Global stock trading is now commonplace. In 1989 Americans poured \$13.7 billion into foreign stocks, up 813 percent from 1988. All told, net cross-border equity investments soared to a record \$92.3 billion—nearly triple the previous high of \$31.7 billion, set in 1986. Such cross-border investments are undertaken quietly; the American investor, assigning his or her savings to a mutual fund, an insurance fund, or a pension plan, may often be unaware of lending to or buying into companies with foreign-sounding names, headquartered in exotic places. But the people who manage the funds, and who compete furiously to achieve higher returns than other fund managers, now scour the globe for investment prospects.

There's a good reason: during the 1980s overseas stocks gained an average of 22 percent a year, calculated in U.S. dollars; U.S. stocks gained 17 percent a year. In a recent survey conducted by Louis Harris & Associates, money managers, traders, and corporate finance officers predicted that nearly a quarter of their trading

volume would involve foreign securities by 1995, up from 14 percent today. More than half of the 198 corporate treasurers interviewed predicted that in five years they would be selling bonds, stocks, and commercial paper in overseas markets.

American capital also leaves the United States in the form of factories, equipment, and laboratories placed in foreign lands by American-owned corporations. Here, too, the reason is that higher profits are often available abroad. Europe is booming in anticipation of 1992's integrated European market. Many East Asian economies continue to expand at a breakneck rate (although not quite so fast as they did). Thus, although profits earned in the United States by American multinational corporations dropped by 19 percent in 1989, the overseas profits of these firms surged by 14 percent. Small wonder that American firms, having increased their capital investments abroad by 13 percent in 1989, expected to increase them still more—by a whopping 17 percent—last year, while increasing their American investments by slightly more than six percent. Hewlett-Packard now designs and makes personal computers in France; Texas Instruments makes a large percentage of its semiconductor chips in Japan; more and more of the automobiles produced by the Big Three are designed and engineered in Germany, Italy, or Japan.

Wealthy Americans may reap high returns from their worldwide investments, but the rest of us enjoy few of the beneficial consequences. With the connections between American capitalists and the American economy thus unraveling, all that remains rooted within our borders is the American *people*.

National Assets

THE ANSWER ISN'T SIMPLY TO TAKE MONEY from the wealthy and spread it around, however, as Democrats often want to do. Even though the investments of individual Americans are becoming disconnected from the American economy, there is a growing connection between the amount and kind of investments we make together as a nation and the capacity of America to attract global capital. Herein the new logic of economic nationalism: the

skills and insights of a nation's work force, and the quality of its transportation and communication links to the world (its infrastructure), are what make it unique, and uniquely attractive, in the new world economy. Increasingly, educated brainpower—along with roads, airports, computers, and fiber-optic cables connecting it up—determines a nation's standard of living.

To understand why, it's first necessary to grasp what is happening to the global economy. The highest earnings in most worldwide industries are to be found in locations where specialized knowledge is brought to bear on problems whose solutions define new horizons of possibility. Whether the industry is old or new, mature or high-tech, specialized knowledge is accounting for a larger and larger portion of its revenues. The hottest sector of the tool-and-die-casting industry, for example, produces precision castings out of aluminum and zinc for computer parts. The leading textile businesses depend on the knowledge needed to produce specially coated and finished fabrics for automobiles, office furniture, rain gear, and wall coverings, among a great many other products. The fastest-growing semiconductor firms make microprocessors and customized chips that are tailored to the particular needs of buyers. As computers with standard operating systems become virtually identical, the high profits come from devising software to meet particular user needs.

Traditional services are experiencing the same rapid transformation. The fastest-growing telecommunications services involve specialized knowledge: voice, video, and information processing; the development of "smart buildings," to connect office telephones, computers, and facsimile machines; and running specialized communications networks that link employees in different locations. The fastest-growing trucking, rail, and air-freight businesses meet shippers' needs for specialized pickups and deliveries, unique containers, and worldwide integration of different modes of transportation. The leading financial businesses offer a wide range of interconnected services, including banking, insurance, and investment, tailored to the unique needs of individuals and companies.

These businesses are highly profitable both because customers are willing to pay a premium for goods and services that exactly meet their needs and, more important, because they are knowledge-intensive businesses that cannot easily be duplicated by low-cost competitors elsewhere in the world. Worldwide competition continues to compress profits on anything that is uniform, routine, and standard—that is, on anything that can be made, reproduced, or extracted in volume almost anywhere on the globe. The evidence shows that successful businesses in advanced nations respond to this dynamic by moving toward the higher ground of specialized products and services.

To be sure, successful companies have not entirely jet-

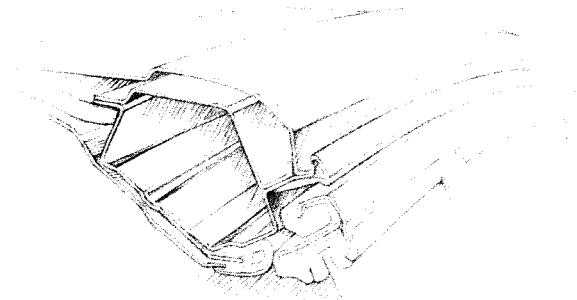
tisoned high-volume, standardized production. Japanese companies, for example, continue to improve their synchronized systems for mass-producing automobiles, video-cassette recorders, and semiconductor chips. And there will always be a lucrative worldwide market for Coca-Cola, blue jeans, and other staples of modern society. But to maintain competitiveness even in mass-produced commodities requires continuous improvement. Japanese cars, VCRs, and computer chips appear in ever greater variety and at ever higher quality; Coca-Cola develops new formulas and products and marketing techniques. Here, as elsewhere, the barrier to entry is not volume or price; it is skill in finding new and ever-more-valuable connections between particular ideas and particular markets.

The Core Skills

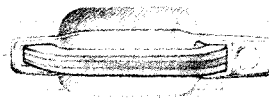
LOOK CLOSELY AT THESE HIGH-VALUE BUSINESSES and you see three different but related skills that drive them forward. First are the *problem-solving* skills required to put things together in unique ways (be they alloys, molecules, semiconductor chips, software codes, movie scripts, or pension portfolios). Next are the *problem-identifying* skills required to help customers understand their needs and how those needs can best be met by customized products. In contrast to marketing and selling standard commodities—which requires persuading many customers of the virtues of one particular product, taking lots of orders for it, and meeting sales quotas—the key here is to identify new problems to which customized products might be applicable. The art of persuasion is replaced by the identification of opportunity.

Third are the skills needed to link problem-solvers and problem-identifiers. Those with such skills must understand enough about specific technologies and markets to see the potential for a new product, raise whatever money is necessary to launch the project, and assemble the right personnel to solve and identify problems. They play the role of *strategic brokers*.

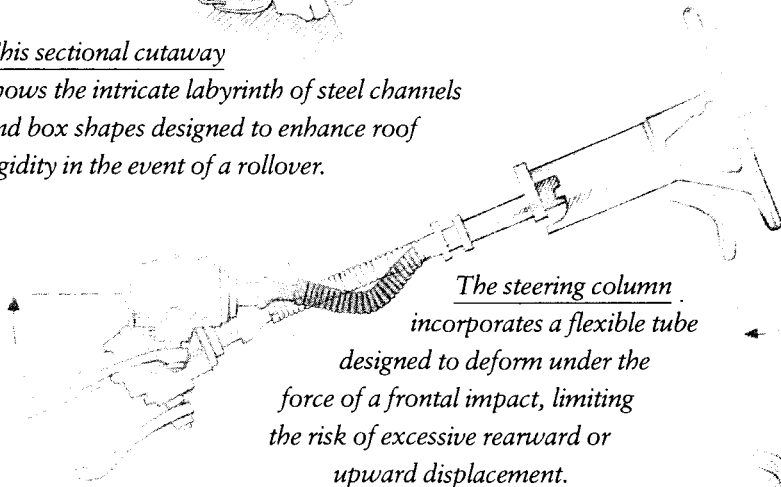
In the high-value businesses, profits derive not from scale and volume but from an ongoing discovery of connections between the solutions to problems and the identification of new needs. The idea of "goods" as something distinct from "services" has become meaningless, because so much of the value provided by a successful enterprise—in fact, the only value that cannot be easily replicated worldwide—entails services: the specialized research, engineering, design, and production services necessary to solve problems; the specialized sales, marketing, and consulting services necessary to identify problems; and the specialized strategic, financial, and management services necessary to broker the first two. High-value enterprises are in the business of providing such services.



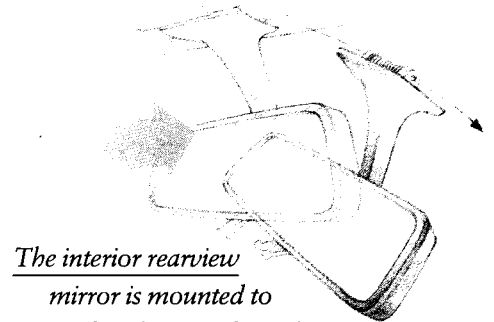
This sectional cutaway shows the intricate labyrinth of steel channels and box shapes designed to enhance roof rigidity in the event of a rollover.



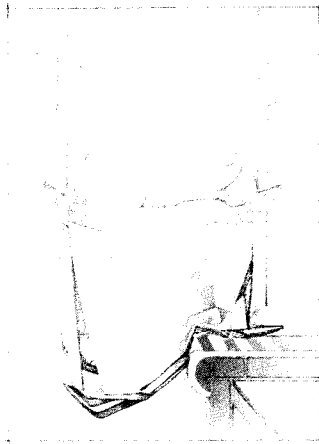
The exterior door handle is not a styled flap but a sturdy grip. Its looped shape is meant to permit maximum pulling force should rescue assistance ever be needed.



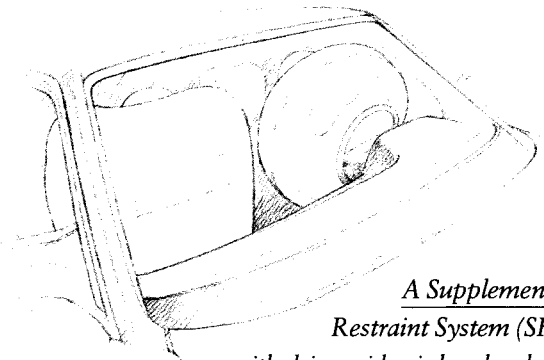
The steering column incorporates a flexible tube designed to deform under the force of a frontal impact, limiting the risk of excessive rearward or upward displacement.



The interior rearview mirror is mounted to break away if struck with moderate force.

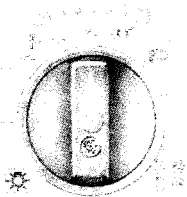


The frontal structure is designed to absorb and channel kinetic energy not only in head-on but also offset frontal impacts—more frequent and more severe. Mercedes-Benz pioneered both the basic energy-absorbing body concept and this offset enhancement.

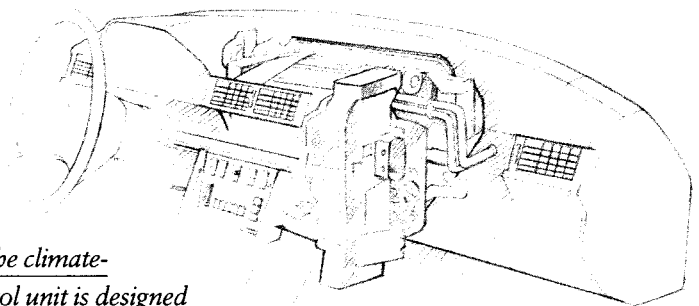


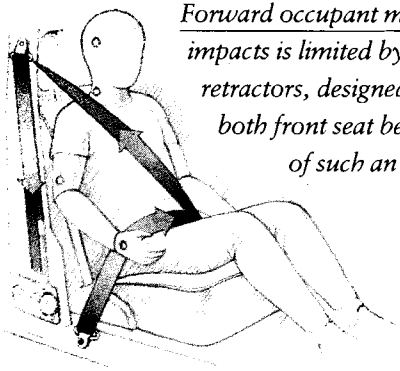
A Supplemental Restraint System (SRS) with driver-side air bag has been standard in every Mercedes-Benz since 1985. On many models, the system now includes both driver and front passenger air bags.

Like every interior control and lever, this recessed headlight-control switch is designed and shaped and placed to help reduce the chance of occupant injury in a severe impact.



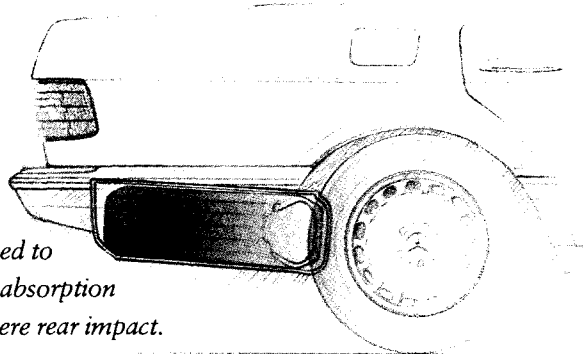
The climate-control unit is designed to be crushable in a severe impact, minimizing the risk of its being pushed rearward into the passenger area.



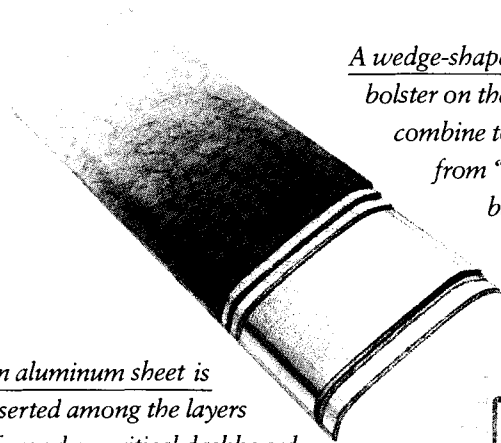


Forward occupant movement in certain impacts is limited by emergency tensioning retractors, designed to tighten slack in both front seat belts within milliseconds of such an impact.

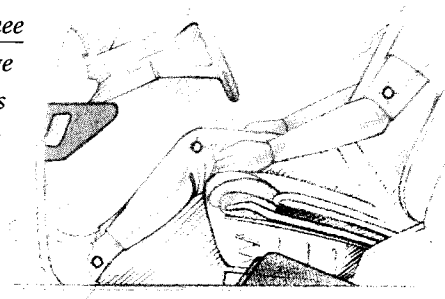
The spare tire's placement is designed to add extra energy absorption in case of a severe rear impact.



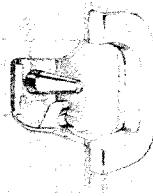
A crash course in Mercedes-Benz



A wedge-shaped seat insert and a padded knee bolster on the instrument panel's lower edge combine to help prevent front occupants from "submarining" under their seat belts in a severe frontal impact.



An aluminum sheet is inserted among the layers of wood on critical dashboard areas to help prevent splintering under the force of a direct impact.



Recognizing the importance of keeping occupants inside the car in a severe impact, Mercedes-Benz places extreme importance on door-lock design. This cone-type lock was patented in 1959 and has since been steadily refined.

The most effective single safety element is still the seat belt. So please, buckle up—even if you drive a Mercedes-Benz. For more information about Mercedes-Benz safety, call 1-800-243-9292 or visit your authorized Mercedes-Benz dealer. Some of the safety features depicted vary from model to model.



ENGINEERED LIKE NO OTHER CAR IN THE WORLD



Steelmaking, for example, is becoming a service business. When alloys are molded to a specific weight and tolerance, services account for a significant part of the value of the resulting product. Steel service centers help customers choose the steels and alloys they need, and then inspect, slit, coat, store, and deliver the materials. Computer manufacturers are likewise in the service business, because a larger and larger portion of every consumer dollar goes toward customizing software and then integrating and installing systems around it. The immensely successful IBM personal computer comprised a collection of services—research, design, engineering, sales, maintenance; only about 10 or 15 percent of its purchase price reflects the actual cost of manufacture.

America's arcane system of national accounting still has separate categories for manufacturing and services—classifying, for example, computer software as a service (although it is reproduced like a manufactured item), and a computer as manufactured goods (although an ever-larger portion of its cost lies in services). The pharmaceutical industry is classified under “manufacturing” although production costs represent a tiny fraction of the price of a drug; most costs derive from research and development, clinical trials, patent applications and regulatory clearances, drug marketing, and distribution. Ninety-one percent of the increase in the number of jobs since the 1982 recession was in services, and, remarkably, 73 percent of private-sector employees now work in service businesses. But as the line between services and goods blurs, such numbers are increasingly meaningless—they do not tell us what is actually going on in the economy, and where the real value lies.

A Nation's Key Exports

IT FOLLOWS THAT THE VALUE A NATION'S WORK force adds to the world economy is no longer measurable in terms of products shipped across borders. Increasingly a nation's key exports are the skills involved in solving, identifying, and brokering new problems. Products are becoming composites of global services from many different nations. Consider: A London department-store buyer of high-fashion apparel orders a line of dresses devised by a New York fashion designer. Within an hour of the order the designer sends via satellite the drawings and specifications for making the dresses to a fiber-optic link in Hong Kong, where they appear on a high-resolution computer monitor, ready for a manufacturing engineer to transform them into prototype garments. The prototypes are then reproduced in a Chinese factory. The designer, the engineer, and the factory supervisor conduct a video teleconference to work out details, and the finished garments arrive in London less than six weeks after the order was placed. Here, America “exported” a fashion design and some management services linking the design with the London buyer and the Hong Kong and Chinese technicians.

This sort of trade is hard to pin down. When, as now, traders deal repeatedly with one another across borders—exchanging services that are priced not on an open market but by agreement among divisions of the same global corporation or according to complex employment contracts, profit-sharing agreements, or long-term supply arrangements—determinations about what it is that one nation has paid out to another nation can be no better



than fair approximations. Thus trade statistics are notoriously imprecise, subject to wide swings and seemingly inexplicable corrections. The truth is that these days no one knows exactly at any given time whether America's (or any other nation's) international trade is in or out of balance, by how much, or what the significance of an imbalance might be. For the same reason, it's becoming impossible for governments seeking to levy corporate taxes to tell exactly how much of a given product is made where. Peter J. Sprague, the chairman of the American-owned National Semiconductor Corporation, says, "We are using Russian engineers living in Israel to design chips that are made in America and then assembled in Asia." Is it an American product? Who can tell?

The notion that products have national origins is so deeply ingrained that governments, and the publics they represent, are often preoccupied with such things as calibrating trade imbalances and determining corporate taxes—both predicated on subtle measurements and elaborate legal definitions—when they should be concerned about a far more relevant issue: what portion of the value of any given product derives from the ability of the nation's workers to conceptualize problems and solutions?

Why Ownership Matters Less

THE KEY INDUSTRIAL STRUGGLE OF THE LATE nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century was between those who owned the machines and those who ran them. Each side wanted a larger share of the resulting revenues. American politics reflected this tug-of-war: the Republican Party

emerged as the voice of the American industrialist, the Democratic Party as that of the American blue-collar worker. The dominant images of the two parties even today owe much to this struggle.

In the emerging global economy, however, the interests both of laborers and of investors are increasingly subordinated to the interests of those who solve, identify, and broker new problems. This trend has been gathering momentum for several decades. Through the postwar era the wages of U.S. workers engaged in routine production have steadily declined as a percentage of the gross national product, from 11.6 percent in 1949 to approximately 4.6 percent in 1990. During the same interval corporate profits have also diminished as a percentage of the gross national product. In the mid-1960s corporate profits reached 10.98 percent of GNP, and then fell, to 7.48 percent in 1970. Subsequent percentages have been lower at both expansionary heights and recessionary lows. By the end of the 1980s profits claimed only 6.29 percent of GNP.

As the portions of GNP going to routine laborers and to investors have steadily dwindled, the portion going to those who solve or identify problems and those who broker solutions has steadily grown. In 1915 the wages of routine production workers in the typical American manufacturing firm accounted for about 45 percent of the cost of making the product. By 1975 they made up only 25 percent, with most of the remainder going to designers, technicians, researchers, manufacturing engineers, industrial engineers, planners, strategists, financial specialists, accountants, executive officers, lawyers, advertisers, and marketers. Almost 80 percent of the cost of a high-

technology item such as a computer is attributable to conceptualizers like these.

The increasing subordination of financial capital to intellectual capital has confused investors. "Owning" a company no longer means what it once did. Members of the accounting profession, not known for public displays of emotion, have fretted openly about the difficulties of informing potential investors about the true worth of enterprises whose value rests in the brains of employees. As intellectual capital continues to displace plant and equipment as the key asset of corporations, shareholders find themselves in an ever more tenuous position, for much of the value of an enterprise can disappear with the departure of key employees. In 1986 General Electric assumed that it had acquired Kidder, Peabody, the financial-services firm. But when GE tried to exert control over its new acquisition, many of Kidder's most highly skilled employees departed for more congenial surroundings.

Certain intellectual assets will remain even after talented employees depart, of course—among them patents and copyrights. But in the emerging economy such distilled intellectual capital often loses its value quickly. After all, patents and copyrights only guard discoveries made at a particular point in time; they do not protect the identification of a specific problem that consumers are eager to solve (for example, how to record television programs for viewing at a more convenient time) or insights gained after the patenting of a given solution (such as that consumers might like a video-cassette recorder to double as a lightweight camcorder). Yet these sorts of discoveries—that a market exists, and that there are various ways to serve it—are often even more valuable than the original patented or copyrighted invention. Problem-solvers, problem-identifiers, and brokers who may have had no part in developing the original product race to exploit the new markets that have been uncovered and stimulated by the discovery. Often, greater rewards flow to quick and clever followers than to brilliant and original inventors. Although legally protected, inventions are rapidly outmoded and replaced.

The steady subordination of financial capital to intellectual capital has confused Americans who worry that foreigners are "buying up" the nation's technological assets. Such worries are usually unfounded. In fact it is often the case that without the foreign money, the intellectual capital that has already accumulated in the United States would not develop further.

Consider two typical American firms that were acquired by foreigners in 1989: Materials Research, a semiconductor-equipment manufacturer whose American owners sold it to Sony after the firm found it impossible to raise money from American investors or to borrow it from American banks; and Arco Solar, sold to Germany's Siemens by Atlantic Richfield, the giant American oil company, which was no longer willing to finance Arco's effort to become the world leader in photovoltaic tech-

nology. Superficially it appears that foreigners are running off with two of America's leading-edge technology companies. But look closely at these two firms and you find groups of American problem-solvers and problem-identifiers who have accumulated potentially valuable insights about how to produce highly efficient semiconductor equipment and solar energy, respectively. In acquiring them, the foreign firms have not destroyed this cumulative learning, nor have they enslaved these Americans and shipped them back to Japan and Germany; the American problem-solvers and problem-identifiers have no intention of leaving the United States. That some of the profits now go to investors outside the United States is no cause for great alarm; the assets with the greatest value, commanding the highest return, remain within our borders.

Such cumulative skills and insights, upon which future innovations are based, make up the nation's key technological assets. They will be lost only if insufficiently nurtured and developed, as they might have been in these cases had foreign capital not come to the rescue.

The Virtuous Cycle

IN THE EMERGING ECONOMY OF THE TWENTY-FIRST century only one asset is growing more valuable as it is used: the problem-solving, problem-identifying, and strategic-brokering skills of a nation's citizens. Unlike machinery that gradually wears out, raw materials that become depleted, and patents and copyrights that grow obsolete, the skills and insights that come from discovering new linkages between technologies and needs increase with practice.

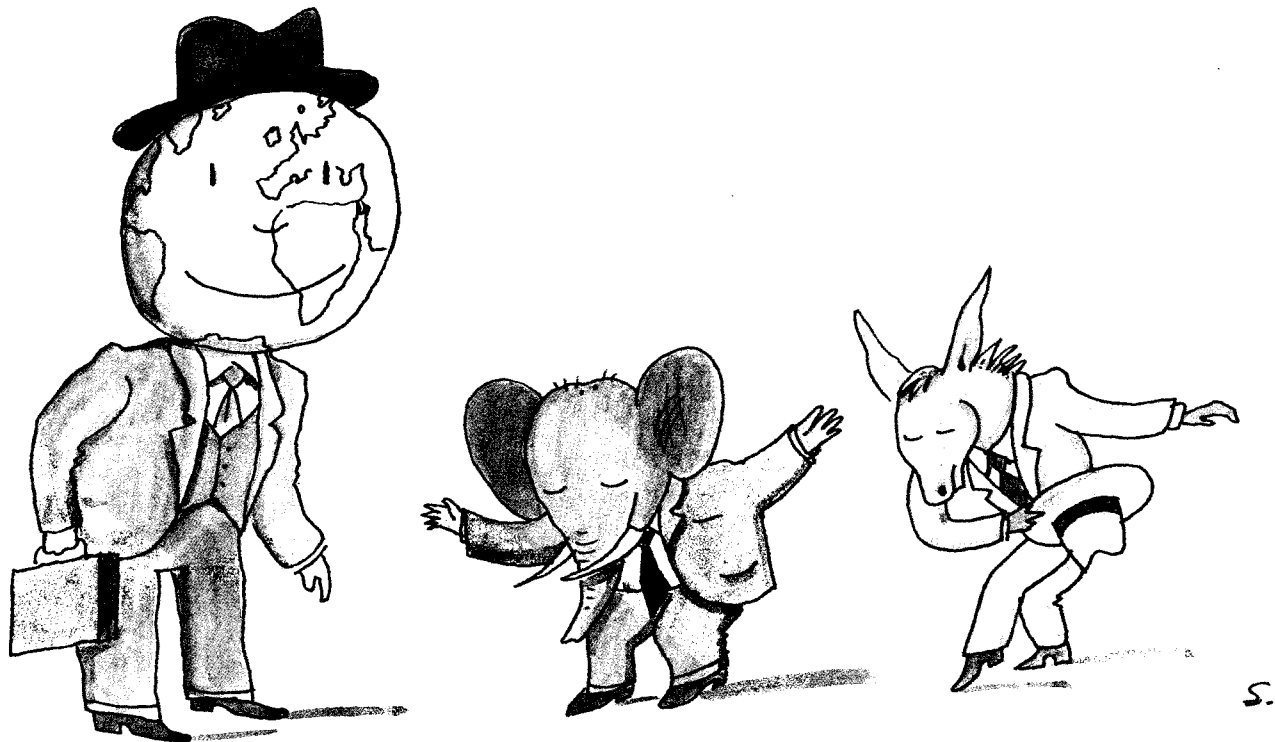
The more complex the task, the better preparation it provides for the next, even more complex task. One puzzle leads to another. Assembling just the right combination of technical and marketing skills to develop software for assisting mechanical engineers can help strategic brokers gain insight into what's needed to develop more-complex software for aerospace engineers. Developing and marketing specialty chemicals can lead to developing and marketing high-performance ceramics and single-crystal silicon. And so forth.

Conventional economic theory assumes that a resource gets used up when it is put to work. As it becomes scarce, its price increases; the price rise in turn encourages buyers to conserve the resource and find cheaper substitutes, which ultimately brings the price down again. One of the great advantages of a price system, as all economists will quickly attest, is that it tends to balance itself automatically. But human capital operates according to a different principle. Because people learn through practice, the value of what they do tends to increase as they gain experience. This system is not self-correcting, in the sense that workers who first gain knowledge and insights do not eventually lose whatever premium in price they have

commanded in world markets when others catch up with them. Rather, a work force can become steadily more valuable over time as insights lead to other insights.

Thus a virtuous cycle can be set in motion: A work force possessing a good basic education, which can efficiently bring the fruits of its labors to the global economy, can attract global capital for its performance of moderately complex tasks. The experience gained by performing these tasks generates additional on-the-job training and experience, which serve to lure global capital for more-complex activities. As skills build and experience accumulates, the nation's citizens receive more and more from the rest of the world in exchange for their services—which permits them to invest in better schools, transportation, research, and communications systems.

or vicious cycles gather momentum gradually, and often imperceptibly. No one would intentionally choose the vicious cycle, but in the contest for global capital such a choice is sometimes made implicitly. Politicians are everywhere trying to lure the world's capital, like traveling salesmen hawking their wares or carnival barkers pitching their special attractions. Mikhail Gorbachev tells business leaders in Minneapolis about the benefits of investing in the Soviet Union; President Gnassingbe Eyadema, of Togo, courts executives in Atlanta; Governor Bill Clinton sells Japanese business executives on the wonders of Arkansas; Mayor David Dinkins touts New York to European investors. Similar pitches must be made even to hometown investors, lest they take their savings elsewhere. "There is the greatest competition in



As their problem-solving, problem-identifying, and brokering skills grow, and their links with the world steadily improve, their income rises.

But without adequate skills and infrastructure, the relationship can be the opposite—a vicious cycle in which global money and technology are lured only by low wages and low taxes. These enticements in turn make it more difficult to finance adequate education and infrastructure; the jobs available under these conditions provide little on-the-job training or experience pertinent to more-complex jobs in the future. Such a vicious cycle has no natural stopping place. Theoretically it can continue to push wages downward until the citizens of the nation (or region, or city) have a standard of living like that typical of the Third World.

The choice is rarely as stark as this, of course. Virtuous

the last forty-five years for financial capital," William T. Archey, the international vice-president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, told *The Washington Post*. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is visited every eight to ten days by some foreign delegation seeking investments by American companies.

Some carnival barkers promise skilled workers and world-class infrastructure; others promise low wages. If they want to improve the standard of living of their citizens, they will make the former kind of promise, and they will bargain for the sort of jobs that will give their workers on-the-job training in conceptualizing problems and solutions.

In virtuous cycles low wages are not the central attraction. The average worker in the former West Germany earns a higher hourly wage than the average American,

Are we able to make large public investments and demand sacrifices of ourselves in order to pay for them? Are we capable of bargaining with global corporations?

but global capital is nonetheless attracted to Germany by the nation's pool of skilled workers and its first-class transportation and communications facilities. There most non-college-bound young people enter apprenticeship programs, in which they learn technical skills. Germany is already on the way to transforming its modern system of autobahns into "smart" superhighways that can regulate traffic flow by computer. France, another high-wage nation, has provided a videotext system free of charge to all telephone subscribers, has recently launched a computerized library and information bank designed to be accessible from every home, and is aggressively training scientists and engineers. Japan is building a \$250 billion fiber-optic network that by the year 2000 will carry video, voice, and data around the nation up to 1,000 times faster than existing networks can. All three of these nations are spending significant sums of money on education, training, and research and development.

The National Bargain

IT IS EASIER TO FORM A VIRTUOUS RELATIONSHIP with global capital if you are a nation strongly committed to economic development—ruled by a benevolent dictator like Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew, dominated by a single political party and an "old boy" oligarchy, as in Japan, or habituated to a form of corporatist planning orchestrated by big banks and major industrial firms, as in Germany. In such countries political power is sufficiently concentrated that substantial resources can be mobilized for education, training, research, and infrastructure—and sacrifices can be elicited from the public in order to make these investments. Moreover, deals can be cut with global corporations—offering subsidies, tax breaks, or access to the national market in exchange for good jobs.

But what of a decentralized and contentious democracy like the United States, which deeply distrusts concentrated power? Apart from war emergencies, are we able to make large public investments and demand sacrifices of ourselves in order to pay for them? Are we capable of bargaining with global corporations?

Much of the responsibility for America's national economic development has fallen by default to states and

cities. America bids for global capital through fifty state governments that compete against one another, and thousands of cities and townships, which also compete. Who successfully lures the jobs becomes a matter of state and local pride as well as employment; it may also bear significantly on the future careers of politicians

who have pledged to win them. The possibility of establishing a factory in the region sets off a furious auction; a threat to remove one initiates equally impassioned negotiations. All too often these jurisdictions bargain for routine jobs that will be automated out of existence in years to come or else will drift to the Third World. Lacking educated workers and an up-to-date infrastructure, many of our governors and mayors have little to offer except what is euphemistically known as a "good business environment"—meaning low wages, few regulations, low taxes, and generous subsidies.

Forty-three states maintain offices in foreign capitals for the express purpose of bargaining for global capital, according to the National Association of State Development Agencies. Unlike most nations, which have a unified international economic strategy, the United States has dozens—emanating from such places as Little Rock, Arkansas, and Lansing, Michigan. When Chrysler-Mitsubishi's Diamond-Star Motors announced, in 1985, that it would begin assembling automobiles in America, four states (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio) entered the competition. The winner was Illinois, which offered a ten-year package of direct aid and incentives worth \$276 million—or about \$25,000 for every new job that Mitsubishi planned to create in the state. As the bidding has intensified during the past fifteen years, the incentives have become more generous. In 1977 the state of Ohio induced Honda to build an auto plant there by promising \$22 million in subsidies and tax breaks; by 1986 it took a \$100 million package from Kentucky for Toyota to create about the same number of jobs there.

The total amount of subsidies and tax breaks flowing to global firms of whatever nationality is much higher than it would be if the United States did its bargaining as a whole, through the federal government. Nations whose constituent parts refrain from internecine battles end up paying far less to lure jobs their way. Although direct comparisons between the United States and other nations are hard to come by, an analogous situation suggests the magnitude of the difference. In seeking the rights to televise the 1988 Olympic Games in Calgary, the Western European nations bid as a whole. In the United States, in contrast, each television network made its own separate bid. The Western European market contains

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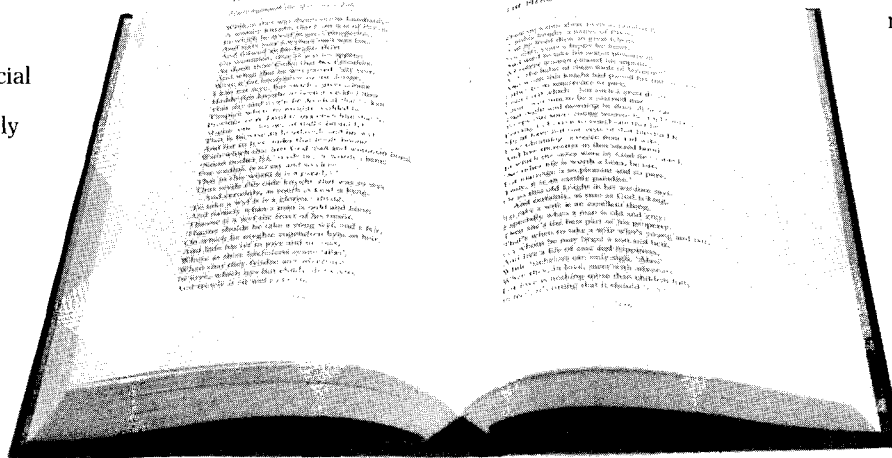
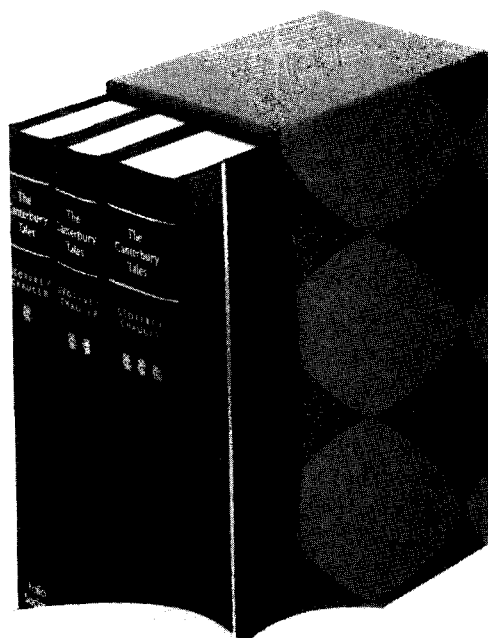
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even more people than the U.S. market, with buying power that is at least as great. Nevertheless, because Western Europe negotiated as a whole, it got the rights to televise the Olympics in Europe for \$5.7 million. The winning network in the United States paid \$309 million to televise the Olympics here.

Disinvestment

EVEN IF AMERICA BARGAINED FOR GLOBAL CAPITAL as a nation, it would still have difficulty attracting good jobs unless it could offer an educated work force and first-class transportation and communications systems. And here lies a more serious problem. For even as other nations have been increasing their public investments in people and infrastructure, the United States as a *nation* has been cutting back. As the table below shows, federal spending on infrastructure, nondefense research and development, and education has steadily dropped as a proportion of the gross national product from 1980 onward. By 1990 federal investment as a proportion of GNP was lower in each of these categories than it was in 1970. States and cities with large populations of poorer Americans have been hard pressed to make up the difference.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT SPENDING
AS A PERCENTAGE OF GNP

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
Physical Investment	.97	1.03	1.14	.91	.75
Education	.43	.43	.51	.40	.37
Nondefense R&D (excluding space)	.36	.39	.42	.37	.31

From "The Federal Budget and the Nation's Economic Health," by Charles L. Schultze, in *Setting National Priorities* (The Brookings Institution, 1990).

Consider infrastructure. David Aschauer, an economist at Bates College and formerly a researcher at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, has shown a direct link between America's investments in infrastructure and the productivity of the nation's work force: a one-dollar increase in the stock of public infrastructure adds as much to the productivity of Americans as a four-dollar increase in the stock of business capital. His calculations imply that a one-time increase of \$10 billion in the stock of public infrastructure would result in a *permanent* increase of \$7 billion in the annual GNP. Aschauer's study has been criticized for being too optimistic; after all, he demonstrates only that public investment and national productivity growth have increased and decreased together, over the same interval of time—not that the one necessarily caused the other. But even accepting the possibility of

other explanations for why American productivity growth has slowed, the correlation is striking. The United States began to cut back on public investments just when public investments became uniquely important in the new global economy.

In the early 1960s the United States began building a modern transportation system. Spending on infrastructure at all levels of government then absorbed almost four percent of the nation's GNP; it held that position through the 1960s. That's when we began to build the interstate highway system, for example. The productivity of the American work force soared. But the growth of public spending on the nation's transportation system declined throughout the 1970s, just as our productivity growth declined. Infrastructure spending declined even more sharply in the 1980s, to the point where the nation was spending only two percent of GNP on building and maintaining infrastructure. Hence the specter of collapsing bridges, crumbling highways, and rush-hour traffic jams extending for miles.

Although part of the decline in spending represents a failure to maintain existing infrastructure, spending on new infrastructure has fallen even more dramatically, from 2.3 percent of GNP in 1963 to only one percent in 1989. As Western Europe and Japan lay plans for "smart" roads, high-speed trains, and national information networks, America lies dormant; the nation has not even built a new airport since 1974. As of the beginning of last year Washington was annually investing about the same amount of money in infrastructure (in constant dollars) as it had invested thirty years before, although the gross national product had grown 144 percent in the interim. It is projected that physical capital investment, which accounted for 24 percent of total federal outlays in 1960, will account for less than 11 percent in 1991.

Expenditures on public elementary and secondary education have shown a similarly perverse pattern—falling short just as intellectual capital has become a uniquely important national asset. Many politicians and business leaders (and many ordinary citizens) are quick to claim that the current crisis in public education is unrelated to a lack of public funding. One premise of their argument—that there are many means of improving American schools that do not require large public outlays—is surely correct. Yes, responsibility for teaching needs to be transferred from educational bureaucracies to classroom teachers; and yes, the inculcation of basic skills must be the primary mission of the schools.

Researchers have, however, found that schools with smaller classes and better-paid teachers produce young people who command higher salaries once they join the work force. David Card and Alan Krueger, researchers at Princeton University, studied the education and incomes of a million men born from 1920 to 1949 who attended public schools. They found that even within the same socio-economic group, higher lifetime earnings correlate

with smaller class size and better-paid teachers (for every year of schooling above eighth grade, students' subsequent earnings increased 0.4 percent for every five fewer students per teacher, and for every 10 percent hike in teacher salaries, subsequent earnings increased 0.1 percent). The extra tax revenues generated by these higher lifetime incomes alone would finance the smaller classes and better-paid teachers.

Controlled for inflation, public spending on primary and secondary education per student increased during the 1980s, when the nation began to fret openly about the quality of its public schools, but not appreciably faster than it did during the 1970s. From 1970 to 1980 annual spending per student grew 36 percent in real terms; since 1980 it has grown 38 percent.

strains on our schools, particularly in poor inner-city and rural areas. And with one out of five American children now falling below the poverty line—a significantly higher proportion than obtained fifteen years ago—the challenges are magnified. As for today's teachers, their wages have barely risen in real terms since the early 1970s—and yet talented women today have many more lucrative career options than teaching, and we also want to attract talented men to the profession.

Ironically, the schools facing the biggest social problems have been getting the least help. The averaging of figures on per-pupil expenditures in the United States disguises growing disparities among states and school districts. As federal support for elementary and secondary education has waned and states and localities have been



Yet there are several reasons for believing that the more recent increases have been inadequate. First is the comparative measure of what other nations are spending. By the late 1980s America's per-pupil expenditures were below per-pupil expenditures (converted to dollars using 1988 exchange rates) in eight other nations—namely, Sweden, Norway, Japan, Denmark, Austria, West Germany, Canada, and Switzerland. (Even using the exchange rate from 1985, when the dollar was at its height relative to other currencies, the United States is still behind—but in fourth place rather than ninth.)

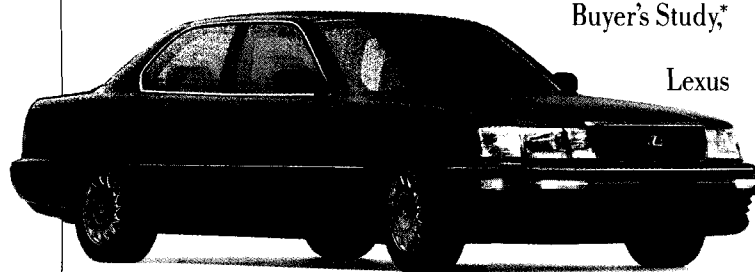
International comparisons aside, it is true that the demands on public education in the United States have grown significantly during the past fifteen years. Increasing numbers of broken homes, single-parent households, and immigrants (both legal and illegal) have placed great

forced to pick up the bill, the burden has fallen especially heavily on the poorest jurisdictions with the most limited tax bases. New Trier High School, in one of Chicago's most affluent suburbs, pays its teachers 34 percent more than the average teacher in Chicago's public high schools, whose pedagogic challenges are substantially greater. Public schools in White Plains and Great Neck, two of the richest suburbs of New York, spend twice as much per pupil as schools in the Bronx. (The first set of students in each of these comparisons is on the way to a virtuous relationship with global capital, the second set to a vicious one.)

In 1965 the nation decided that all students who qualified to attend college should have access to higher education. Here again, public investment ranked high on the nation's agenda. The resulting Higher Education Act es-

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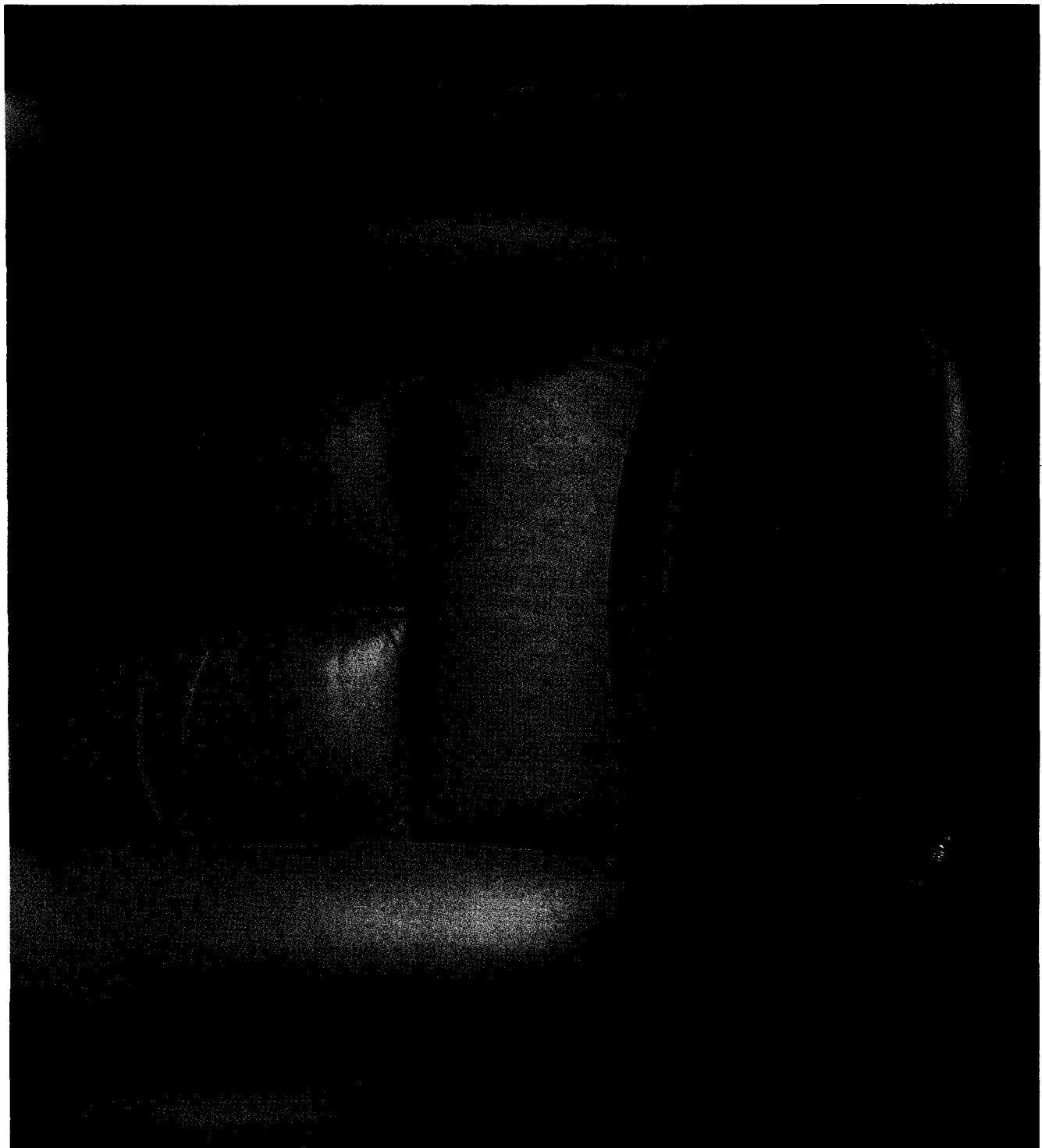
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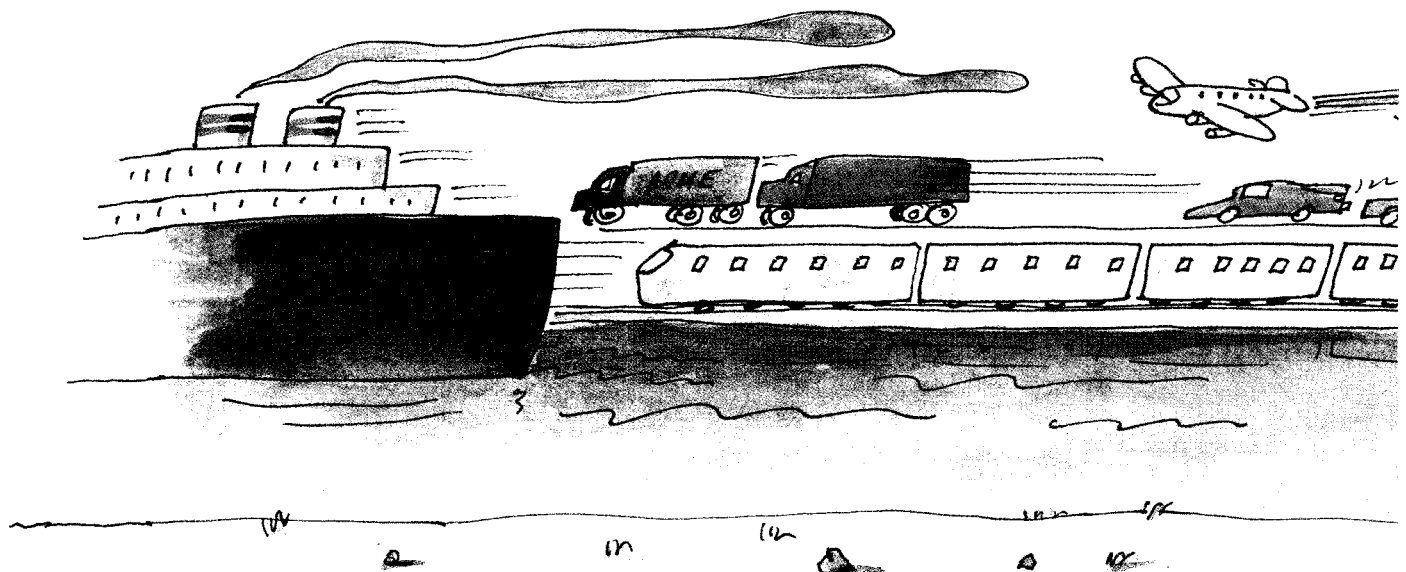
established a system of grants and loan guarantees for low-income students, thus increasing their proportion even at private universities, from 22 to 26 percent by the mid-1970s. But by 1988, with grants and loan guarantees drying up, the proportion of low-income students at private universities had fallen below 20 percent. The high costs of higher education have helped to push them out and set them on their way toward a vicious relationship with global capital. (In the compromise 1991 budget federal funds for student aid will increase 10 percent for the academic year 1991–1992, but the prospect for the following year looks grim.) Meanwhile, in an equally ominous development, the federal retreat from higher education is being replicated at the state level. The rate of increase in state support for higher education dropped to a thirty-year low in 1990, representing the smallest increment since data on this subject have been collected. State universities have long promoted mobility among children of less affluent families. These data suggest that in future there will be less mobility. Even high schoolers safely in the middle class are being squeezed out of college. From 1982 to 1989, while the proportion of American middle-income families (\$40,000 to \$60,000) dropped five percent, the proportion of middle-income students in public universities dropped 10 percent.

Federal support for research and development (excluding defense and space) has also languished; it now accounts for 0.31 percent of GNP, the smallest proportion in twenty years. Corporate America hasn't filled the gap. All told, nondefense R&D accounts for two percent of GNP in the United States, compared with almost three percent in Japan and 2.6 percent in the former

West Germany. We have sacrificed, as a consequence, not breakthrough discoveries (which, after all, are almost immediately shared in by the scientific community and corporations worldwide) but the know-how and experience that come from *doing* current research.

While Western Europe, Japan, and many developing nations are ensuring that their scientists and engineers are ready to embrace the microelectronic and molecular technologies of the future, America is squandering its scientific and engineering brainpower. Federal funding of university research dropped 18 percent in real terms from 1967 to 1990. The National Science Foundation's 1990 budget for most small research projects in mathematics, physics, chemistry, engineering, biology, and computer science—the seed corn of science—fell below even that for 1988. Steven Younger, of the Los Alamos National Laboratory, told *The New York Times*, "The foundation of university science is dying."

Federal funding to train and retrain workers, meanwhile, dropped by more than 50 percent during the 1980s, from \$13.2 billion to \$5.6 billion. Most other industrialized nations—including Germany, France, Britain, and Japan—devote a much higher percentage of their GNP to workplace training. Private training, the costs of which corporations deduct from their taxable incomes, has hardly made up the difference. American companies claim to spend some \$30 billion a year training their employees, but most of these funds have been used on what is euphemistically termed "executive training." College graduates are 50 percent more likely to be trained by their corporations than are high school graduates, and employees with postgraduate degrees are 30



percent more likely than college graduates. Those who lack a rudimentary educational background receive little compensatory training from the private sector.

Can We Afford It?

THE OFFICIAL REASON GIVEN FOR WHY AMERICA cannot invest more money in infrastructure, education, research, and training is that we cannot afford it. In his inaugural address George Bush noted regretfully, "We have more will than wallet." It has become a frequent lament. But only excessive politeness constrains one from inquiring, Whose will? Whose wallet?

The claim that America cannot afford to invest any more money than it does in the future productivity of its citizens is a curious one, to say the least. Americans are not overtaxed. In 1989 we paid less in taxes as a percentage of GNP (about 30 percent) than the citizens of any other industrialized country. Wealthy Americans, in particular, are not overtaxed. Their marginal income-tax rate is the lowest top tax rate in any industrialized nation. Nor does the U.S. government overspend. If defense is excluded from the calculation, the combined spending of state, local, and federal government accounts for a smaller share of GNP in America than in any other industrialized country, including Japan.

This nation was willing to dig deep into its wallet to rebuild Western Europe and Japan after the Second World War. Now, with an economy four times as large as it was then, we should be able to rebuild America. Bush has it backward: We have the wallet. What we lack is the will.

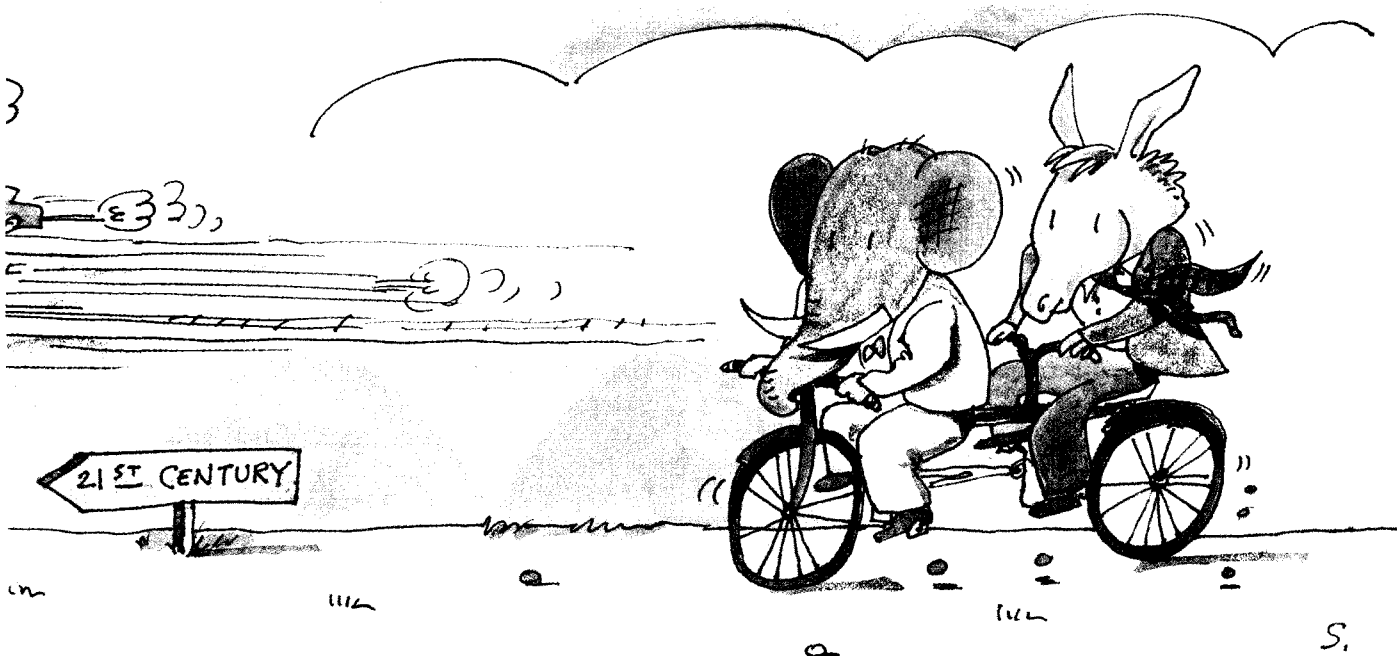
Republicans do not want taxes on the wealthy raised; Democrats do not want entitlement programs diminished for the middle class. As a result, less and less is left over for public investment.

The current debate between Republicans and Democrats over economic growth or fairness obscures the real issue, which is how much we are willing to invest in the future productivity of Americans. Each year the American economy generates about \$5 trillion worth of goods and services. If we dedicated only four percent of this sum—about \$200 billion a year—to public investment during the 1990s, the nation could get ready for the twenty-first century.

Where would the money come from? First: a more progressive income tax. During each of the past few years American citizens have had about \$3,500 billion to spend, after taxes. About half this sum has gone to the lower four fifths of wage earners, the other half to the top fifth. Were the personal income tax as progressive as it was even as late as 1977, in 1989 the top tenth would have paid \$93 billion more in taxes than they did. At that rate, from 1991 to 2000 they would contribute close to a trillion dollars more, even if their incomes failed to rise.

Second: limiting entitlements to those who need them. If there were no cap on the income on which the pension and disability portions of Social Security payroll taxes are levied, and if all Social Security benefits were treated as taxable income, another \$600 billion would be freed during the decade.

Third: defense cuts. If defense spending were to fall during the decade by 15 percent (a fairly modest, and by most accounts realistic, decrease, even considering the



In his inaugural address George Bush noted regretfully, "We have more will than wallet." Bush has it backward: We have the wallet. What we lack is the will.

cost of policing regional conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere), we would have an additional \$450 billion. A strong national economy is more important to our national security than troops and weapons.

The grand total: more than \$2 trillion for the 1990s—to say nothing of all the savings that could be achieved by bargaining with global capital through the federal government instead of the states and cities. This sum would constitute a significant down payment on the future productivity of *all* Americans. The \$2 trillion should be spent on education (at all levels), training, research, and infrastructure. It should *not* be used to reduce the budget deficit. Contrary to what many in government and much of the public assumes, there is nothing wrong with being indebted so long as the borrowings are invested in means of enhancing our future wealth. In fact, taking on debt for this purpose is preferable to maintaining a balanced budget by deferring or cutting back on such investments. Debt is a problem only if the borrowings are squandered on consumption. Any competent business person understands the soundness of this principle: If necessary, you borrow in order to invest in the greater future productivity of your enterprise. Once the new levels of productivity are achieved, they enable you to pay back the debt and enjoy higher returns thereafter.

To be sure, we have already engaged in a consumption frenzy, in the 1980s; can we afford to embark on a new era of investment off this base of indebtedness? The question should be reversed: Can we afford not to? Our future capacity both to pay off the debt and to assure our children and grandchildren a high standard of living depends largely on the public investments we make today—a principle that we have irresponsibly neglected over the past decade. The long-term case is compelling. But even as a short-term anti-recession strategy, increasing public investment makes sense.

Politicians and business leaders are quick to concede the central importance of national economic strength, but they fail to comprehend the new basis of that strength, which is to an ever greater extent public investments in work-force skills and infrastructure. "Increased economic strength is . . . fundamental to success in the

global competition with rising economic superpowers," the Bush Administration noted, correctly, in its 1991 budget submission to Congress. "Thus, there is a first-order issue for the budget (and the economic policy it represents): How can it best preserve and build upon America's strengths, while advancing the American

economy toward even greater capacities for leadership and growth?" Having asked the right question, Bush's budget wizards got the answer wrong. They advocated public parsimony—sometimes outright cuts—in infrastructure, education, training, and related public endeavors, accompanied by reductions in the tax rate for capital gains. "National economic strength" was tacitly equated with the savings and investments of individual Americans. Further, the Administration has signaled that whatever savings result from smaller defense outlays should be used to cut the budget deficit and, if possible, reduce taxes, rather than be invested in good schools, roads, and other forms of public capital.

Yet the national wealth no longer depends, as it once did, on the accumulation of financial capital in American hands. It depends on the development of the skills and insights of our citizens, and on the infrastructure necessary to link them to the new world economy. The Democrats have displayed almost as little insight on this point as have the Republicans. In the final budget compromise of last October the Democrats carefully insulated Social Security benefits from future cuts by removing the entire program from budget calculations, and barely touched Medicare. As a result, these programs for the elderly will account for the only real growth in domestic spending to occur between now and the year 2000. But what about the nation's future productivity? As part of the same compromise, the total of public investments in education, training, research and development, and infrastructure will be frozen at the 1991 level, adjusted for inflation. (Slight increases for several of these programs in 1991 will be offset by cuts in 1992.) It was further agreed that any additional revenues from tax increases would be used only to expand entitlements or to reduce the budget deficit.

A message for Republicans and Democrats alike: Stop fighting over how much money government is taking from the wealthy and redistributing to everyone else. Start worrying about the capacity of Americans to add value to the emerging global economy. What we own is coming to be far less important than what we are able to do. □

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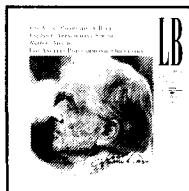
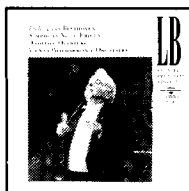
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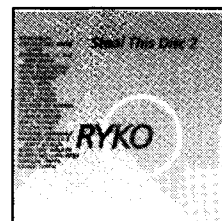


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A Short Story



The Time for Kissing

by Roxana Robinson

MY MOTHER NEVER CALLS ME, SO I CALL her. I make the call on Sunday nights. She answers right away, and I know exactly where she is. She spends Sunday evenings in what is called the library, though it has only two bookcases in it, and those hold more plates than books. Mother sits in the flowered-chintz armchair, which matches the curtains. Bacon, the dog, is lying next to her feet, on his green pillow. The walnut table beside my mother holds an ashtray, a small porcelain Cavalier King Charles spaniel, and her drink, which is Scotch. Next to her chair is a standing lamp, and her feet are up on the footstool, which also matches the curtains. On her lap is the newspaper, which is folded back to the TV section. She is holding a cigarette in one hand and the TV remote control in the other. When the telephone rings, she is interrupted.

"Hello, Mother?" I say.

"Who's this?" she asks warily, unwilling to commit herself.

"It's me," I say, "Susannah."

"Oh, yes," Mother says, and if I say nothing, she pulls herself together and adds, "Hello."

"How are you doing?" I ask.

"Fine," she says, faintly peevish.

Mother is seventy-one years old, and has lived alone since Harry died, three years ago. When he retired, they began spending most of their time in Southampton. They sold the big shingled house on the beach, where we spent our summers as children, and moved to this smaller one behind high privet hedges. When Harry died, Mother sold the apartment in New York as well. At first she planned to spend a night or two in New York during the winter weeks, but now she hardly ever does.

"What have you been up to?" I ask. "Anything exciting?"

"I don't know what you call exciting," she says. "We had the Garden Club meeting on Wednesday. There was a bridge party at Wah-Wah's on Thursday. That's about it."

"How was the Garden Club meeting?"

"All right. Though I don't know how Bambi Johnson got herself elected president; the woman is the very worst executive I've ever heard of. Most of the members won't speak to her anymore. She ruined the benefit last year, *single-handedly*."

"Well, at least she's good at something," I say, but Mother won't have it.

"Good at what? What do you mean?"

"Ruining the benefit," I say, but I know she won't laugh, and she doesn't. My mother suspects my offerings. She says nothing, and I have the feeling that she has turned the television set back on, low, so I won't hear it.

"Do you want me to call you back?" I ask.

"What? No, why?" she says.

"I thought you might be in the middle of something."

"No, nothing at all."

"Well, I just wanted to check in with you. We're all fine," I say, since my mother hasn't asked, "except the garden is a nightmare with all this rain; the slugs are all over the place."

"It's getting pretty bad," my mother says ambiguously; I'm not sure if we're talking about the slugs or something on her program.

"How's Bacon?"

"Bacon's *fine*," my mother says, animated at last. "He's right here at my feet, snoring his head off. Eats like a pig. Keeps me

awake all night, and sleeps all day." She is devoted to the dog.

"The reason I called was to tell you that I'm coming out next week to see Linda, and I thought I'd spend the night with you." Linda is a friend I grew up with in Southampton.

"What day?"

"It would be Tuesday."

"All right," she says neutrally. "I'm out to dinner, though."

"That's fine," I say. "I'll spend the evening with Linda."

When I hang up, I go back into our bedroom. The

Susannah wanted to know how much, in the end, she owed her mother, and how much her mother owed in return

sight of it is a relief: cool and spare and muted. My house has no chintz. John is already asleep, lying like a friendly boulder in our bed. He goes to sleep early, though he doesn't sleep long: later, in the small, deadly hours of the morning, he will be awake. But now he is fathoms deep, and I move quietly, turning off the light on his side of the bed. I go into my bathroom to undress, and while I brush my teeth I look at the small photographs on the wall next to the mirror. There are pictures of John, of our children, Nat and Amanda, my sisters, Joan and Kathy, my friend Linda, a few other favorites, like amulets, emblems of my life. There is one of Mother, taken at a party years ago. She has her hands on her hips; she is wearing a rose-colored dress with big puffy sleeves, and laughing.

I climb into bed next to John. Our sheets are cotton, and solid white, not the scratchy flowered Porthault linens I grew up with. John's legs are warm and solid. I turn my back, get out my book, and press myself against the length of him.

MY FATHER was well born, impecunious, and wonderful to look at. One can easily see why Mother married him, and why she left. My father talks with a little tiny smile hovering about his mouth: he is already charmed by what he is about to say. Most other people find him charming too. My sister Joan told me that women used to call up and ask for him. Mother would say, "Would you like to leave a message? This is his wife." The other woman would say, "His *wife*?" In spite of my father's charm, he is hard to live with. He is now on his fourth marriage, and each wife is richer than the last. My mother was the first, and she had no money at all. When I was three, the fourth child, my mother divorced my father and married Harry Satterthwaite. Harry had lots of money, and we moved to a big duplex apartment on the corner of Park and Seventy-ninth Street.

We all hated Harry: I, my sisters, and even Ted, our older brother, though he pretended to be above our concerns. Harry was only ten years older than my mother, but when I was little he seemed from a different age. His

skin looked as if it had been put in storage: his cheeks were smooth and ancient, as though their living were over, and he had loose, thick rolls of flesh underneath his chin. The top of his head was bald, with brown spots on it. Deep gullies ran from his nose to the corners of his mouth, and his teeth were yellow. His clothes were beautiful: soft leather loafers, cashmere jackets, silky cotton shirts. A man called Edwards, whom we also hated, came in the mornings to look after Harry's clothes and polish his shoes. When Ted acted like a stinker, Joan would ask him if Edwards was going to start coming in to look after his moldy moccasins, his torn sweaters, and his stained Madras jackets. This made us collapse with laughter, but

Ted could not answer without aligning himself either with us or with Harry, so he would punch us.

One evening at dinner Harry said loudly, "There will be no more chewing with open mouths at this table." I was six, and had just recently been allowed to eat with the grown-ups in the dining room. We all preferred the big white-tiled kitchen, where we ate with Sally, the cook, when there were dinner parties. The dining room was large and gloomy; at the windows were tall gray curtains that swooped back halfway down, and the table was long and dark and shiny, with a glass chandelier over it. In the middle of the table were two silver pheasants, fierce and spiky. Still, it was a privilege to sit there with the rest of the family.

When Harry made his announcement, my mother

didn't say anything; she went on buttering a roll as though she hadn't heard. She wore her light-brown hair in a shoulder-length pageboy, parted on the side, with a narrow velvet ribbon holding it smoothly in place. At dinner she wore a cashmere sweater over her dress, with the arms loose over her shoulders, like a cape. Mother always had a certain look to her: slim and polished, her linen dresses ironed, her hair neat. It seemed lovely to me, effortless and silky, as though my mother, just by being, happened to be perfect.

We looked at each other out of the corners of our eyes, and Joan kicked me under the table. Joan was three years older than I. She remembered living with my father, and



she was unbelievably brave. She now sat up straight at the table, holding the heavy silver fork easily, and looked back at Harry with interest, as if she were going to discuss it with him. "Why on earth not, Harry?" she might say. I always felt as though Joan were a seawall between me and the rough, ugly waves, breaking the shocks for me.

"It's disgusting, and I won't have it," Harry said, gaining confidence. He picked up the heavy crystal glass and took a long swallow of Scotch. I watched his throat move as he swallowed. The lump in it rose sluggishly, suddenly bobbed, and then disappeared mysteriously, as he lowered his head and his short neck vanished. "You," he said, looking at me. I wondered if he knew which one I was. He often confused us, calling us by one another's names. Joan and Kathy were the easiest to mix up, because they were close to the same size and they looked alike, with their round faces, sleek honey-colored hair, and blue eyes. "Did you hear what I just said?" Harry said.

I nodded, fearful, but kept on eating. I didn't consider the possibility that I was doing anything to bring on this attack; Harry's temper seemed unrelated to the real world. My big linen napkin was on my lap, where it was supposed to be, my silverware was on the plate as I ate, my milk had not slipped over the rim of the glass when I set it down, but clearly I was in for it, whatever it was.

"Well, *stop* it." He glared at me. "Leila, do you see what that child is doing?" he said loudly to my mother.

She glanced briefly up at me, and down again at her plate. It was pot roast and carrots. "Hmhmhm," she said, and addressed the meal.

"I am in *earnest*," Harry said, and leaned forward in his mahogany chair, gripping the arms with his hands. His chair and Mother's had arms; the rest of us were left defenseless from the sides. Harry looked at me again, and I wondered what name he would use. "Susannah, leave this room," he said, and he waved his hand briefly, a high, short, weak wave, as though he didn't really expect me to leave. He looked down at his plate at once, and began sawing away at the pot roast. When he started talking again, it was a sort of warning grumble, a retreating storm. "You can finish your meal in the kitchen, and don't come back until you have learned how to eat your food properly. It's disgusting, watching someone else's dinner wallow around in their mouth."

I didn't move, because I still wasn't sure what was going on and he didn't sound serious. Harry looked up and saw me. "Didn't you hear me?" he said, and looked down the table at my mother again. She was staring with a look of intense concentration at an empty space on the table, as if she had gone mad.

"Can't find it," she announced. "Don't know how they lose it. There it is." Underneath the table she found the bell with her toe and pressed. The door to the kitchen

swung open, and Harry fell silent as Maureen came in. "Could we have some more water, in the pitcher, and I think we're ready for seconds, Maureen."

When Maureen left, Joan said, "Mother, I . . ." and I knew she was trying to run interference for me, but at the same time Harry said, "*Leila*." He was really angry now.

"Susannah, you heard Harry," my mother said, without looking up. "Finish your dinner in the kitchen." I slid off the scratchy needlepoint seat and picked up the heavy plate carefully, trying to keep the carrots from rolling off.

After dinner I went up to Joan's room. Kathy and Joan were lying on the beds, and Ted stood in the doorway, not committing himself.

"He's such a pig," Kathy said. She was two years older than I.

"I am in *earnest*," Ted said querulously, and drank from an imaginary glass.

"Just pass me some more of that whiskey," Joan said, "and I'll be even more earnest. I'm earnest and thirsty, all at the same time. I'm thirnest. I'm earsty." She threw herself back on her bed and let her tongue hang out, rolling her eyes whitely. "This is *really* earnest," she announced. She was still wearing her school uniform, a dark plaid jumper and a white blouse, and her green knee socks were rolled down to her ankles. Her loafers, which were scuffed and dull, hung moronically off her feet.

"Biscuit likes carrots," I said. Biscuit was our big apricot poodle, who could be counted on to appear noiselessly under the kitchen table and dispose discreetly of unwanted items.

"Maybe he'd like Harry," Kathy said. "Maybe we could feed Harry to him."

"Ooof," Ted said, wrapping his arms caressingly around his own stomach. "Poor Biscuit." This started us all laughing, and we began to imitate Biscuit making various responses to the offer of toasted Harry. While we were doing these hilarious things, Mother came along the hallway, getting her glasses. She walked with her head slightly down, as though she were watching her neat small shoes, with rosettes on the toes. Mother was going back down to play backgammon with Harry in the library. She looked in at us but did not say anything.

"Hi, Mom," Ted said easily. He was her favorite. She paused and smiled.

"Having a good time?" she asked, and Ted, who had no conscience, grinned and nodded. "What are you all up to?" she asked, which made us laugh harder, as we imagined actually telling her. Her smile now included us all, and she laid her rare approval on us, on Ted lounging in the doorway, grinning, Joan and Kathy rolling goofily on the beds, me holding my stomach on the floor, on all of us as we had frozen in our poses, miming the disgusted response of a poodle to the offer of her husband.

I ARRIVED IN SOUTHAMPTON AROUND NOON THAT Tuesday. I had told mother I'd be there before lunch, but unless I arrived early she'd go out. Later she would tell me I had said I was coming after lunch.

The house is made of whitewashed brick. It was built in the thirties, on part of a bigger property that had been split up. Like all Southampton houses, it has a luscious velvet lawn, and those dense hedges. There are a few perfunctory flower beds, but Mother doesn't like gardening herself. She has Johnny Rubetti put in the garden for her, and every year he plants the world's most boring display of yellow, pink, and orange: marigolds, dahlias, and zinnias.

Mother was in the summer room, at the back of the house. The room was originally an open porch; first it was screened in, now it is glassed in. It's meant to feel like part of the garden, so it's furnished with uncomfortable garden furniture, things that could, though they won't, be rained on: rattan sofas with flowered plastic-covered cushions, big porcelain elephants with flattened backs as end tables, and, on the brick floor, woven straw rugs. When Joan first saw the summer room, she asked Mother, "Why don't you get some plaster gnomes, too?"

Mother was sitting in the comfortable chair, talking on the telephone. I waved, and she blinked at me in a friendly way but went on talking. I went to the window and looked out. Johnny had been at work: the zinnias were starting up. The lawn was very lush, a deep, dense green, like a mat, and that brilliant color made me think of our old house on the beach. We used to spend all our summers here in Southampton. Our house had been huge: gray shingled, with white trim, its roofs thick with gables and dormers and clusters of brick chimneys. At the back of the house had been a lawn, in the front the wide white beach, and beyond that the wide green ocean, and beyond that Spain.

We children slept on the top floor, and all our windows looked out on the ocean. The rooms were small, with sloping eaves and rickety white-painted furniture; we loved them. The floors were painted a shiny gray, the

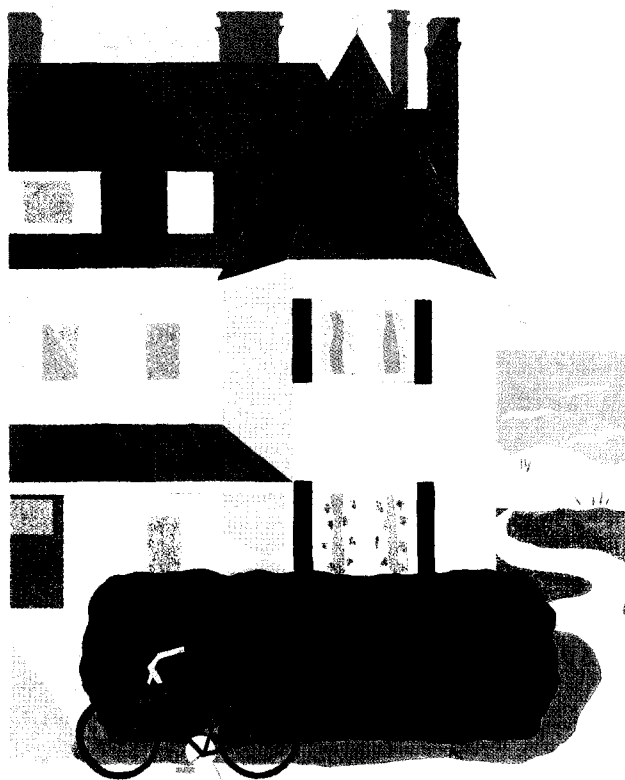
white curtains blew in and out of the windows, and the air in our bedrooms at night was full of salt and freedom. Alone up there we were in our own country; we knocked messages on the walls to one another, we had water fights, we slept in one another's rooms. No one knew what we did; only the maids came up there.

If we felt during the winters in New York as though we were members of the underground, violent subversives whose activities were secret, we felt during the summers as though the liberation had come. In that wild salt air the wind off the sea blew our tangled hair back from our faces as we rode our bikes up and down those narrow lanes, to the beach club, to the tennis club, to our friends' houses. We had our bikes, we had our friends, the days were long, and Harry came out only on the weekends. The rules were benign: don't put your wet bathing suits on the bed; be in by six or call. We had never heard of drugs, and the wickedest things we ever did were watching the boys smoke behind the beach clubhouse, playing strip poker in whoever's house had no parents in it on rainy days, and taking surreptitious snorts out of someone's bottle at a beach party.

In New York we had to obey Harry if he made one of his petulant announcements, but in Southampton we barely looked at him. We walked past him to say good night to Mother as though his chair were empty.

"Who's that girl won the junior tennis tournament?" Harry might ask us. While he was still talking, still in

the middle of his sentence, Joan would turn and ask Kathy a question in a low voice, which neatly removed them both from general conversation and left me and Ted, neither of whom played tennis. This, plus the fact that I was five years younger than the girl (whose name I knew perfectly well), absolved me from having to respond. Ted looked intently into the middle distance, as though he were trying to remember the girl's name. Harry waited, watching us all, for an answer. "Know who I mean?" he continued. "Blonde, kind of a cute girl? Think she's Jewish. Pretty sure she's Jewish. She go to the beach club or not?" At this point Joan and Kathy very quietly asked my mother something, politely not inter-



rupting Harry's conversation with the rest of us. I discovered a truly interesting bite on my leg. Ted continued to look deeply into the middle distance; if pressed by Harry now he would slowly shake his head, as if to show a respectful ignorance of the entire issue. Harry never acted snubbed, and he would finally turn his questioning to my mother. "Think she is. Think the whole family is," as though this were some sort of remarkable deduction. "Got to ask Bobby Woodward what's going on down here."

Mother ignored it all, Harry's efforts and our rudeness, her hair smoothed back from her forehead in the velvet ribbon that picked up a color from her flowered linen dress. She had so many of those velvet ribbons, in so many beautiful colors; they lay in a neat jewel-like coil in the top drawer of her dressing table. No matter what dress she wore, one of her ribbons was the right color.

THE SUMMER THAT I WAS FOURTEEN THE OTHERS were away. Joan and Kathy had gotten jobs on the Cape, and Ted was traveling in Europe. I missed them, especially Joan. It was not hard for me to keep up the glass wall that we had erected between ourselves and Harry, but alone I was more obvious doing it. When Harry asked, "Where are you going tonight?" and looked directly at me, I could do little but respond. I delayed, of course. I took as long as I could to chew my food, and then I took a drink of milk, as though I could not possibly answer a question without a rinsed and perfectly empty mouth. Answering Harry, I looked ingenuously at mother, as though the question were hers.

"The dance at the beach club," I said.

"Who with?" my mother asked.

"Everyone," I said. "We're all going."

"In whose car, though?" Harry persisted.

"Whose car?" I asked, frowning, as though it were not quite clear what he meant.

"Who is driving you to the club, and who is driving you back?" Harry asked.

"Oh, *driving*," I said innocently, as though I had thought he meant some other, remarkably similar, activity. "I don't really know. Someone is picking me up. I'll get a ride back." Harry looked at my mother, leaning forward in his chair, his gray eyebrows raised.

"Don't be in too late," Mother said warningly.

"Oh, I won't be," I said with conviction. "It's just a dance."

They were never up when I got home. Every night of the year, after dinner, Mother and Harry each took another glass of Scotch, went into the library, and sat down at the backgammon table, where Harry believed he always won. At eleven o'clock Harry looked at his watch and said, "Time, gentlemen," and my mother said, "Well, it's a good thing. I'm about ready for the sandman, myself," and they went up. We came home whenever we wanted.

After the dance some of us went down to the beach, where we'd seen a fire. I got home around one-thirty. My ride dropped me off on the road, so that the car wouldn't wake up Mother, and I walked up the driveway toward the house. The night was peaceful, with high clouds moving fast under a swollen white moon. I couldn't see it, but I could feel the presence, on the other side of the house, of the wide empty beach, and I could hear the long rolling waves, with their sleepy, endless rhythm: skirling crash, and pause. In the moonlight the slate roof shone and the chimneys were black: the house looked wonderful, like a castle full of secrets.

The house was usually dark except for a light in the back hall, by the kitchen, and I would go up the back stairs to my room. But that night the back hall was dark, and lights were on in the front hall and in the library. I wondered if Harry and Mother were still playing backgammon or if they had simply forgotten to turn off the lights. I stepped into the front hall, pulling the door quietly behind me so that it wouldn't slam. The living room was dark. I could see reflected gleams from polished things—mirrors, mahogany, porcelain. I heard no sound, but I had the feeling someone was in the library, and I didn't want to go and see who it was. I moved quietly toward the stairs, and had set my foot on the bottom step when I heard my name.

"Susannah?" I didn't want to break the late-night silence myself, so I went to the door and looked in at him.

"I'm home," I said.

Harry was sitting in the wing chair by the fireplace. The backgammon board was still out on the table, along with a bottle of Scotch and his glass. He'd been smoking cigars, and the air was dense and fummy. He leaned back in his chair and crossed his legs, in their pink trousers, at the ankle.

"Well," he said, smiling a little. "Home a bit late, aren't you?"

"No," I said. I didn't know what time it was, but I wasn't going to begin with an admission.

"I think so," Harry said gleefully. "I think so." He waved his hand at me. "Come in and let's talk this over. I think your mother wouldn't like this, your coming in at this hour."

I wasn't crazy to have Mother hear what time I had come in, so I went and stood in front of the cold fireplace. Harry was wearing an ascot tie, and it had come apart. The knot was still tight at his neck, but the flowing part was rucked up and hunched to one side, and his thick neck was exposed. I had never seen Harry's clothes messy before.

"I don't think your mother ought to hear about this," Harry said in a raspy whisper. His voice was blurry with Scotch. "What do you think?" He put his drink down carefully and put his elbows on the arms of his chair, steepling his hands and cocking his head at me. I didn't say anything.

"What do you think, Susannah? Do you think your mother should know what time you came in tonight?" He made a show of pulling up his sleeve to look at his watch. "Quarter of two! Quarter of two in the morning!" He looked up at me. "Do you think she'd be glad to hear that?"

I stood in front of the cold fireplace, my hands crossed over my stomach.

"I'll tell you what," he said, leaning forward, putting his hand out. "Let's make a deal." He gave me a big glassy smile. "A deal? Okay?" I waited. "We won't either of us tell her." He held out his hand to shake, so I put mine out. He took hold of it in his big puffy one as though he were shaking it, and at once put his other hand over the back of it. My poor fingers were trapped between those swollen cushions of flesh, those old damp pads moving slowly back and forth on my skin.

"I think we could keep a little secret from your mother, don't you, Susannah?" Harry was smiling at me now, the skin around his sunken eyes dense and white and grainy, like a lizard's throat. "Come sit down next to me, Susannah," he said, pulling me off balance, partly onto his lap. "We can be better friends than we have been. We can keep a secret, can't we?" His smile was getting broader; it was quite friendly. I half fell against his thin old legs in their soft cotton pants.

Falling into the chair against him, I struggled, but half-heartedly. I was used to his clean pink skin: I had had to kiss Harry periodically since I was a baby. I'd been enfolded by his sagging arms before. I was used to the smell of him. Part of me was ready to fall against him again, unwillingly but dutifully, just the way I always did, as though it were right. And I might have stayed there, I think, out of obedient habit, if he had kissed me the way I was used to, the way he always had. Instead, Harry put his hand on my thigh, my poor young thigh, under my wraparound Madras skirt, and slid his damp soft flesh up my leg. His breathing had changed, and he continued to smile but his eyes looked glazed. I was still off balance, trying to pull myself back, sitting half on the arm of the chair and half on his lap. I could see his face,

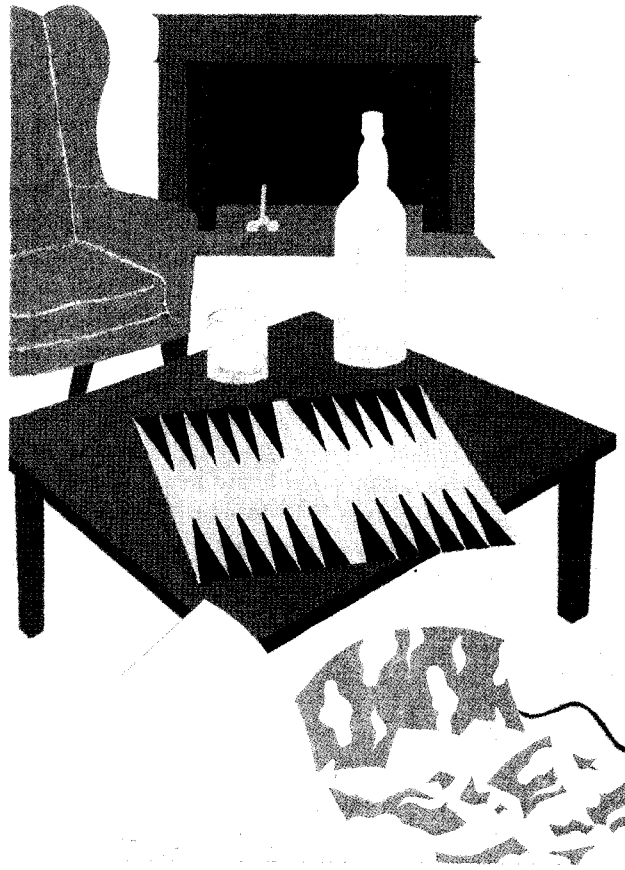
his neck starting to swell and turn red, and his eyes looking boiled. My poor leg, my poor private adolescent thigh that didn't at all need touching, was aching, flaming with mortification. Then I struggled in earnest, writhing like a crazy woman at the thought of his moist old flesh, the secret horror that must be hidden in those soft cotton pants. When I got my balance and struggled back onto the arm of the chair, I pushed his hand away as if it were poisonous, as if it would make blisters, as if it were a black spider creeping up my skin. I tried to get up, and he grabbed my hand and tried to pull me down again, thrusting out his lips—his lips!—as though the sight of them would change my mind and I would soften and lean over and put my own on those bloated, liver-colored things.

But I had turned crazy. I felt as though I were wrestling with an octopus, soft, slimy, and under water: I couldn't breathe. Wrestling, we knocked the lamp over, and when it crashed, I fled. I left Harry in the dark library, with the smashed lamp on the floor, and I ran out into the hall. Up on the first landing I stopped to listen. I heard myself, all my blood vessels open and roaring, my heart thundering along like a locomotive, but no noise from Harry, and no crackling of an electrical fire. I hoped he was dead. I hoped he would have a heart attack there alone in the stinking, disordered library. I took off my shoes and went on up to the third floor. I slept in Joan's room, with the door locked.

In the morning I came down very late to breakfast, to make sure I wouldn't see Harry. My mother was sitting alone at the glass-topped table. She was wearing a cotton shift printed with soft collapsing roses. It had modest slits up the sides, and little bows at the tops of them. Her shoes were rose-colored, and so was her hair ribbon. She looked up at me briefly and down again at her breakfast on the pink linen mat in front of her.

"Good morning," she said. "Did you have a nice time at the dance?"

"Yes," I said. The breakfast room looked right out onto the ocean, which swelled angrily that morning, the water heaving itself mutinously up on the beach.



"I gather you saw Harry when you got home," my mother said. She was spooning a boiled egg from an egg cup with sprigs of flowers all over it. She was concentrating hard, scooping out the rubbery white with a little egg spoon.

"Hmhmhm," I said.

"I gather he wasn't very well," Mother said. Her mouth was turned down at the corners with what looked like disgust but was really concentration, as she scraped the insides of the shell with her spoon. "I gather you had a difficult time." She looked at me, but I didn't say anything. "If he stays up late, he gets very tired, and sometimes someone has to help him out."

I poured Cheerios into my flower-sprigged bowl, and covered them with cream. I ate them slowly, concentrating on the dry, grainy crunch, saying nothing. When I was finished, I stood up. "I'm going to Elaine's," I said. Elaine was of all my friends my mother's least favorite. Mother always found a reason for me not to go to her house. That morning she nodded without looking up, the corners of her mouth still fastidiously turned down, and said, "Be back by lunch or call."

MY MOTHER WAS WEARING A FLOWERED linen dress that Tuesday, and her hair ribbon matched the tulips. When she put down the telephone, I started toward her chair to kiss her hello. Our kisses haven't been much, and we don't hug; in fact, we make little contact at all. We take each other by the upper arms, lightly but firmly, as much to hold ourselves clear as to pull ourselves together. Then we place cheek against cheek and kiss the air. Still, I like these embraces. I like holding Mother's thin, cool body in my arms, just for a moment, smelling her soft skin. I know it's only a symbol, but it's a symbol of something I like. Sometimes I've thought I would tell her that, that I like kissing her. Sometimes I've thought I would take her into my arms and hold her, hug her like a child.

I leaned over to kiss my mother. I could smell her faint perfume as I bent over, but instead of reaching her cheek up toward mine she turned it away from me and held up her hand.

"I've stopped kissing people," she announced.

But it was too late. I couldn't stop myself, I was leaning over, with my hands out for her shoulders. I fell forward, onto my mother in her chair. To my horror I collapsed on top of her, struggling not to, struggling not to fall onto her thin old legs, her frail body, but finding myself in a ghastly moment of writhing, face-to-face embrace. It was terrible. We were touching everywhere, breast, shoulder, rib cage, hands, our arms pushing each other frantically away, and my face brushed against hers anyway. I pulled

myself away from her as though I were burning her—I hadn't meant to force myself on my poor mother—and I stood up, my face flaming, mortified.

"Good heavens," I said inanely, a phrase I never use. "Are you all right? I didn't mean to fall on top of you."

My mother looked disgruntled and disordered, and she put herself back together, smoothing her skirt and patting her hair. "I'm fine," she said severely.

I moved away from her. "So you don't kiss *anyone*?" I asked lightly, trying to sound casual and amused.

"No," Mother said, lighting a cigarette. "I've never liked it. Harry's dead, and I don't have to kiss anyone now. I don't have to and so I don't. My time for kissing is over." Mother settled back in her chair and crossed her narrow brown legs.

"So that's that," I said, smiling, but she wouldn't smile back.

"That's that." She took a long drag on her cigarette in its filtered holder.

It sounded so final. I couldn't think of anything to say, and I couldn't think of what to do with my hands. I felt off balance and humiliated, and as I stood there, intolerably I felt my eyes begin to sting, the inside of my nose draw tight. I shook my head, but I could not keep it from happening: I began to cry in front of my mother, which was something I could not remember having done before. Out of shame I turned my face away.

I stood with my back to her, with my hands covering my face, my shoulders shaking, and I wept and wept and wept. My mother sat in the chair behind me and smoked. I heard her inhale. If she were to say anything, I knew it would be "Crying never helped." I hoped that she would say nothing rather than that, and she complied.

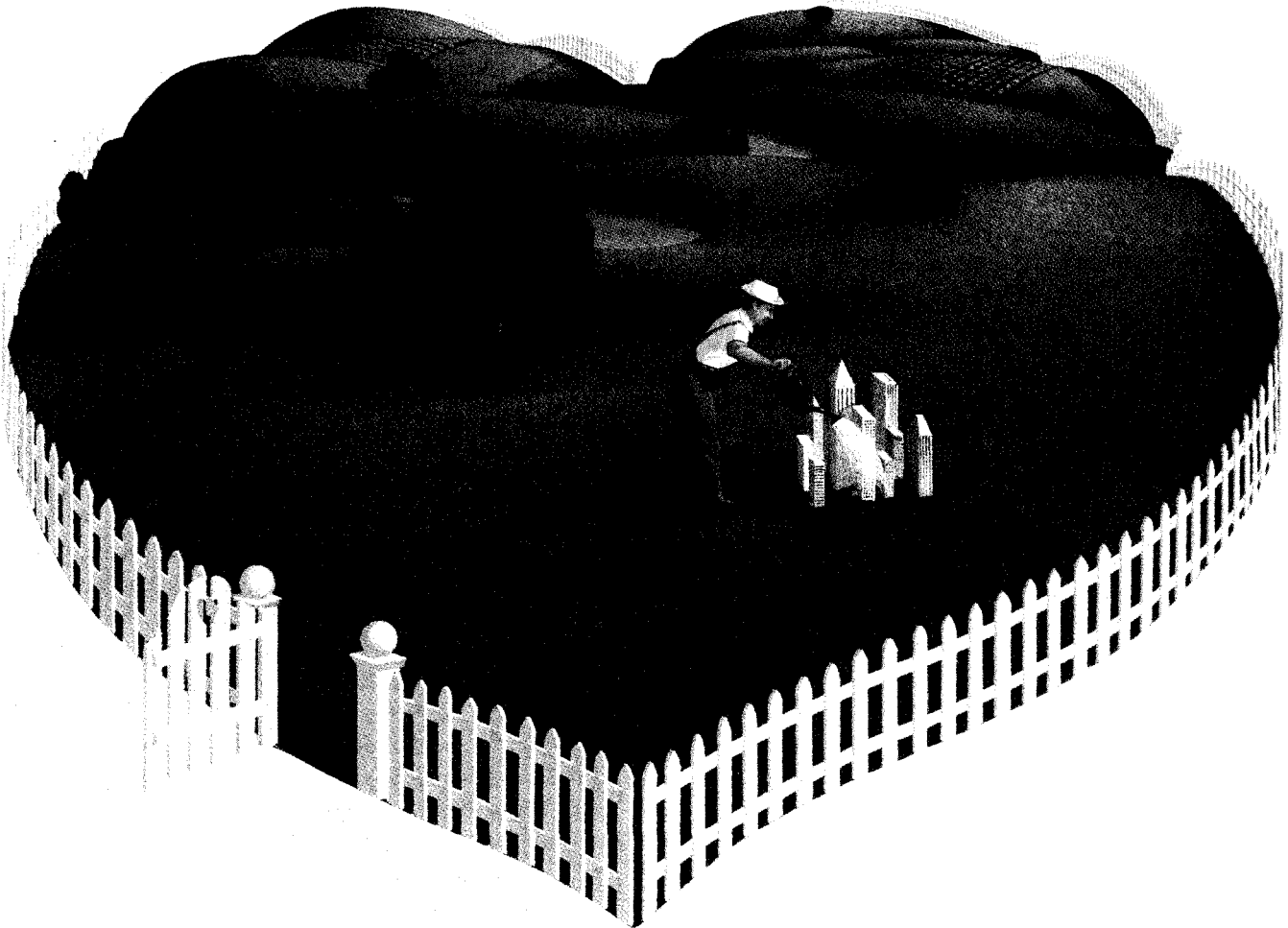
As I wept, I thought of the things I had planned to tell her sometime. I had always thought that sometime we would sit down together, at peace, and we would talk. I would tell her everything: about Harry, about my life, about how it has been for John and me, and the troubles we've had with Amanda, and the times I have thought of divorce and despair. I had thought that this would happen, and now I could see that it would not.

I had wanted to ask her many things too: what it was like for her, being married to my charming, impossible father, and how it was to marry instead someone with money, who could help her bring up her children. Her four children—who laughed at her husband behind her back, who cut her cruelly out of their lives, who made up their own secret and vivid lives without her, who frightened her so that she did not dare look at them, so that she did not dare ask them for anything, for fear they would deny it.

And how it would be for her now, alone, in her small house with the velvet lawn, with her thin, dry, sleek legs, her beautiful velvet hair ribbons, and her Cavalier King Charles spaniel, now that she had given up kissing people. □

OUT OF YOUR CAR, OFF YOUR HORSE

BY WENDELL BERRY



Twenty-seven propositions about global thinking and the sustainability of cities

I. Properly speaking, global thinking is not possible. Those who have “thought globally” (and among them the most successful have been imperial governments and multinational corporations) have done so by means of simplifications too extreme and oppressive to merit the name of thought. Global thinkers have been, and will be, dangerous people. National thinkers tend to be dangerous also; we now have national thinkers in the northeastern United States who look upon Kentucky as a garbage dump.

II. Global thinking can only be statistical. Its shallowness is exposed by the least intention to do something. Unless one is willing to be destructive on a very large scale, one cannot do something except locally, in a small place. Global thinking can only do to the globe what a space satellite does to it: reduce it, make a bauble of it. Look at one of those photographs of half the earth taken from outer space, and see if you recognize your neighborhood. If you want to *see* where you are, you will have to get out of your space

vehicle, out of your car, off your horse, and walk over the ground. On foot you will find that the earth is still satisfyingly large, and full of beguiling nooks and crannies.

III. If we could think locally, we would do far better than we are doing now. The right local questions and answers will be the right global ones. The Amish question "What will this do to our community?" tends toward the right answer for the world.

IV. If we want to put local life in proper relation to the globe, we must do so by imagination, charity, and forbearance, and by making local life as independent and self-sufficient as we can—not by the presumptuous abstractions of "global thought."

V. If we want to keep our thoughts and acts from destroying the globe, then we must see to it that we do not ask too much of the globe or of any part of it. To make sure that we do not ask too much, we must learn to live at home, as independently and self-sufficiently as we can. That is the only way we can keep the land we are using, and its ecological limits, always in sight.

VI. The only sustainable city—and this, to me, is the indispensable ideal and goal—is a city in balance with its countryside: a city, that is, that would live off the *net* ecological income of its supporting region, paying as it goes all its ecological and human debts.

VII. The cities we now have are living off ecological principal, by economic assumptions that seem certain to destroy them. They do not live at home. They do not have their own supporting regions. They are out of balance with their supports, wherever on the globe their supports are.

VIII. The balance between city and countryside is destroyed by industrial machinery, "cheap" productivity in field and forest, and "cheap" transportation. Rome destroyed the balance with slave labor; we have destroyed it with "cheap" fossil fuel.

IX. Since the Civil War, perhaps, and certainly since the Second World War, the norms of productivity have been set by the fossil-fuel industries.

X. Geographically, the sources of the fossil fuels are rural. Technically, however, the production of these fuels is industrial and urban. The facts and integrities of local life, and the principle of community, are

considered as little as possible, for to consider them would not be quickly profitable. Fossil fuels have always been produced at the expense of local ecosystems and of local human communities. The fossil-fuel economy is the industrial economy par excellence, and it assigns no value to local life, natural or human.

XI. When the industrial principles exemplified in fossil-fuel production are applied to field and forest, the results are identical: local life, both natural and human, is destroyed.

XII. Industrial procedures have been imposed on the countryside pretty much to the extent that country people have been seduced or forced into dependence on the money economy. By encouraging this dependence, corporations have increased their ability to rob the people of their property and their labor. The result is that a very small number of people now own all the usable property in the country, and workers are increasingly the hostages of their employers.

XIII. Our present "leaders"—the people of wealth and power—do not know what it means to take a place seriously: to think it worthy, for its own sake, of love and study and careful work. They cannot take any place seriously because they must be ready at any moment, by the terms of power and wealth in the modern world, to destroy any place.

XIV. Ecological good sense will be opposed by all the most powerful economic entities of our time, because ecological good sense requires the reduction or replacement of those entities. If ecological good sense is to prevail, it can do so only through the work and the will of the people and of the local communities.

XV. For this task our currently prevailing assumptions about knowledge, information, education, money, and political will are inadequate. All our institutions with which I am familiar have adopted the organizational patterns and the quantitative measures of the industrial corporations. *Both* sides of the ecological debate, perhaps as a consequence, are alarmingly abstract.

XVI. But abstraction, of course, is what is wrong. The evil of the industrial economy (capitalist or communist) is the abstractness inherent in its procedures—its inability to distinguish one place or

person or creature from another. William Blake saw this two hundred years ago. Anyone can see it now in almost any of our common tools and weapons.

XVII. Abstraction is the enemy *wherever* it is found. The abstractions of sustainability can ruin the world just as surely as the abstractions of industrial economics. Local life may be as much endangered by “saving the planet” as by “conquering the world.” Such a project calls for abstract purposes and central powers that cannot know, and so will destroy, the integrity of local nature and local community.

XVIII. In order to make ecological good sense for the planet, you must make ecological good sense locally. You can’t act locally by thinking globally. If you want to keep your local acts from destroying the globe, you must think locally.

XIX. No one can make ecological good sense for the planet. Everyone can make ecological good sense locally, *if* the affection, the scale, the knowledge, the tools, and the skills are right.

XX. The right scale in work gives power to affection. When one works beyond the reach of one’s love for the place one is working in, and for the things and creatures one is working with and among, then destruction inevitably results. An adequate local culture, among other things, keeps work within the reach of love.

XXI. The question before us, then, is an extremely difficult one: How do we begin to remake, or to make, a local culture that will preserve our part of the world while we use it? We are talking here not just about a kind of knowledge that *involves* affection but also about a kind of knowledge that comes from or with affection—knowledge that is unavailable to the unaffectionate, and that is unavailable to anyone as what is called information.

XXII. What, for a start, might be the economic result of local affection? We don’t know. Moreover, we are probably never going to know in any way that would satisfy the average dean or corporate executive. The ways of love tend to be secretive and, even to the lovers themselves, somewhat inscrutable.

XXIII. The real work of planet-saving will be small, humble, and humbling, and (insofar as it in-

volves love) pleasing and rewarding. Its jobs will be too many to count, too many to report, too many to be publicly noticed or rewarded, too small to make anyone rich or famous.

XXIV. The great obstacle may be not greed but the modern hankering after glamour. A lot of our smartest, most concerned people want to come up with a big solution to a big problem. I don’t think that planet-saving, if we take it seriously, can furnish employment to many such people.

XXV. When I think of the kind of worker the job requires, I think of Dorothy Day (if one can think of Dorothy Day herself, separate from the publicity that came as a result of her rarity), a person willing to go down and down into the daunting, humbling, almost hopeless local presence of the problem—to face the great problem one small life at a time.

XXVI. Some cities can never be sustainable, because they do not have a countryside around them, or near them, from which they can be sustained. New York City cannot be made sustainable, nor can Phoenix. Some cities in Kentucky or the Midwest, on the other hand, might reasonably hope to become sustainable.

XXVII. To make a sustainable city, one must begin somehow, and I think the beginning must be small and economic. A beginning could be made, for example, by increasing the amount of food bought from farmers in the local countryside by consumers in the city. As the food economy became more local, local farming would become more diverse; the farms would become smaller, more complex in structure, more productive; and some city people would be needed to work on the farms. Sooner or later, as a means of reducing expenses both ways, organic wastes from the city would go out to fertilize the farms of the supporting region; thus city people would have to assume an agricultural responsibility, and would be properly motivated to do so both by the wish to have a supply of excellent food and by the fear of contaminating that supply. The increase of economic intimacy between a city and its sources would change minds (assuming, of course, that the minds in question would stay put long enough to be changed). It would improve minds. The locality, by becoming partly sustainable, would produce the thought it would need to become more sustainable. □

*Big houses may someday look
as outdated and impractical as big cars, for
many of the same reasons*

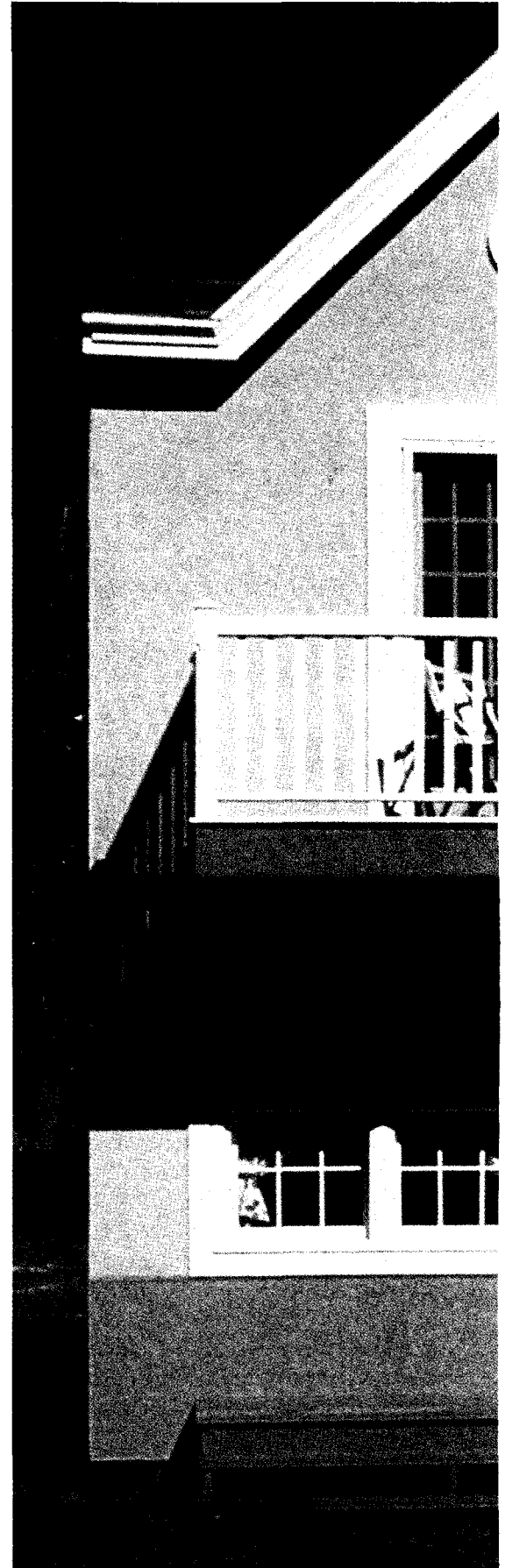
LIVING SMALLER

BY WITOLD RYBCZYNSKI

IN MAY OF 1990 MY COLLEAGUES AND I BUILT A DEMONSTRATION house on the campus of McGill University, in downtown Montreal, to test a thesis of ours: if people thinking of changing houses could experience the advantages of high-quality, smaller, more flexible, and more adaptable houses, they might actually choose smaller rather than larger quarters. The Grow Home was small (1,000 square feet); it included unpartitioned space; it was adaptable to different households; it used good-quality finishes and materials. And it was a row house, only fourteen feet wide. The construction cost was about \$35,000, which meant that the selling price in Montreal, including land and all development costs, would have been less than \$60,000—about half the price of an average single-family house in Montreal at the time.

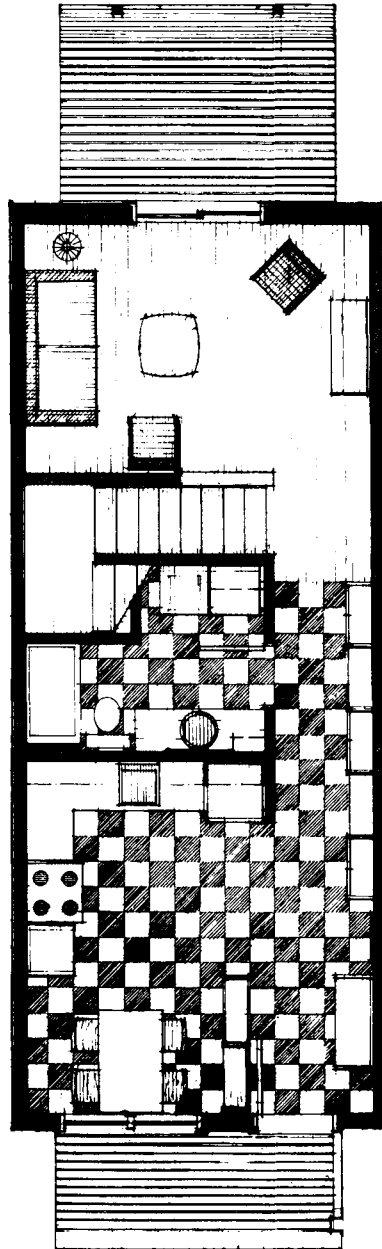
The house was fully furnished (by a Swedish manufacturer of do-it-yourself furniture), and it was open to the public for three weeks. Each day a stream of people made their way up the stairs to the porch and through the house. As they approached the house, their first reaction was usually "Isn't it tiny!" And the Grow Home *was* tiny—fourteen feet is unusually narrow for a row house. Its smallness was exaggerated by its site: it stood alone, like a slice of bread removed from a loaf, surrounded by large university buildings. The Grow Home resembled a doll's house, albeit an elegant one, since the façade was designed in the traditional manner.

Once inside—the first room was the kitchen—people commonly reacted with surprise at the amount of space: "It's much bigger than I thought; it doesn't feel small at all." Fourteen feet is narrow for a house, but it is not

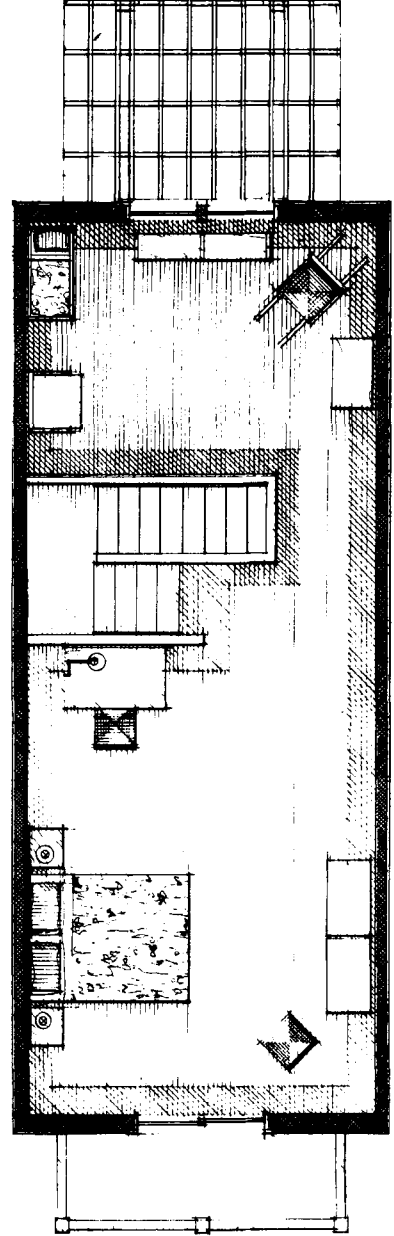




RICK KERRIGAN



LOWER LEVEL



UPPER LEVEL

COURTESY OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY



The model Grow Home provided on two floors enough space for a young couple and a baby. It was given a traditional appearance, in order to make it widely appealing; the house was meant to be seen not in isolation but as part of a row, which encourages both economies in materials and neighborliness.

RICK KERRIGAN (ALL PHOTOGRAPHS ON THIS PAGE)



The Grow Home's very narrowness makes the spaciousness of the rooms inside all the more surprising. The hallway is especially wide, in order to incorporate bookshelves or cabinets. All storage, including that in the kitchen, is provided by the owner.

narrow for a room, and an eat-in kitchen fourteen feet square is spacious, requiring no compromise in layout or counter space. The feeling of roominess continued in a short corridor, which was wider than usual in order to accommodate bookshelves or, in this case, shallow cupboards. Immediately behind the kitchen (and sharing its plumbing) was the bathroom, which was large enough to include a full-size washer and dryer. At the rear of the house was a small sitting room with French doors leading outside to a pergola-covered deck. Like many of the features in the house, the pergola and the deck were part of a list of options that could be added according to the owner's wishes; one might choose a deck (\$610), a wood-strip floor (\$545), or varnished oak stairs (\$800).

The staircase led to a second floor, which was an unexpectedly large space without interior walls, extending from the front of the house to the rear. Part of this loft was

furnished as a baby's room; the other end was the parents' bedroom, with large doors leading to a balcony overlooking the front garden. Movable cupboards replaced built-in closets. It would be possible in the future to create a separate children's bedroom, and there was also enough space for a second bathroom, if one was wanted.

About 10,000 people visited the Grow Home. A questionnaire was made available at the door, and although the 636 responses turned in do not represent a scientific sample, the results were nevertheless revealing.

Understandably, the Grow Home attracted people with modest incomes: half the respondents said that their household incomes were in the range of \$15,000 to \$34,000. Also understandably, these were relatively young households: three quarters of the respondents were under forty-five. Just over a third were single, and about a third had children; almost 40 percent indicated

that they were looking to buy their first house. Asked if they would be ready to live in a house smaller than 1,000 square feet, three quarters answered yes. An overwhelming 93 percent approved of the idea of a second floor that could be completed according to their needs. As for the quality of the materials and the finishes, 66 percent found it to be good or excellent, 32 percent checked off "Acceptable, considering the house price," and only three percent indicated "Disappointing." Did they think that the Grow Home was a good buy at about \$60,000, including land? Sixty-nine percent said yes. The traditional appearance of the Grow Home appealed to almost all (94 percent) of the respondents.

The experience with the Grow Home suggests that our thesis about small houses may well be correct. The urge to be a homeowner remains strong in Canada, as it does in the United States, and young, first-time house buyers obviously understand that they will have to be flexible and make some compromises in their dreams of a home.

Housing Shocks

IT IS NOT REALLY SURPRISING THAT THE GROW HOME met with popular acceptance: the market and the economy have changed in ways that will make everyone compromise and be more flexible. The first of three seismic events that altered how Americans live—and how they must think about buying houses in the future—started as an undetected rumble in the early 1960s, just after the golden age of American housing. Almost three quarters of existing U.S. houses were built after 1940, many in the twenty years following the end of the Second World War. The overwhelming majority followed the same model: single houses for single families. The best-known example, which became a symbol of homeownership throughout the 1950s, was devised by the developer William Levitt. The house was small and uncomplicated, but it had a fully equipped kitchen, the lot was big enough for a garden, and at \$7,990—no down payment and \$65 a month—in 1949 it was a bargain. Homecoming GIs, impatient to get on with their lives, saw this little cottage as just what they needed.

If such houses were uniform "little boxes made of ticky-tacky," in the words of the scornful song, it was not necessarily the result of a lack of imagination but, rather, a reflection of a remarkable homogeneity in the size and composition of American households. In 1940 the typical number of occupants of a house was four: husband, wife, and two children. Their roles were predictable: Dad worked at the factory or office, and Mom stayed home, kept house, and took care of the kids, who played in the yard.

The composition of the family started to change in the early 1960s. In 1956 the median age at first marriage had been 22.5 years for men and 20.1 years for women, a his-

toric low. Now young people started waiting longer before getting married, which, together with birth control (the pill was first marketed in 1960), affected fertility rates: people had fewer children, and had them later. The size of households shrank accordingly, and by 1989 the average number of occupants in a house had dropped to 2.6.

Households were not only smaller but different. Starting in the 1960s, for a variety of reasons, more women began to work, and by the 1970s they were entering the work force in unprecedented numbers; today in more than half of all families both parents work outside the home. At the same time, divorce rates have risen—it is now estimated that half of all marriages will end in divorce. Hence the increased number of single-parent families, most headed by women. More people are living alone, and single-person households now account for almost a quarter of the total, up from 17 percent twenty years ago; during the same period married-couple households went down from 71 percent to 55 percent. The typical family—a married couple with young children—in the Levittown cottage is not typical anymore. Indeed, it is now called the "traditional" family, and makes up less than a third of all households.

The second event that changed the American home involved ownership. Homeownership is important to Americans, about two thirds of whom own their homes—twice the rate in France, Germany, and Great Britain. Throughout the postwar period the amount of money that the median-income family could afford to spend on buying a house exceeded the median price of a new house by several thousand dollars, a situation that persisted even though the average price of a new house increased to \$16,000 in 1955 and to about \$55,000 in 1978. Houses grew more expensive partly because of increased land values and inflation, but as long as family incomes also grew, the rate of homeownership continued to increase steadily. The rising numbers suggested that eventually all gainfully employed people could, if they wished, become homeowners.

During the late 1970s house prices continued to climb as before, while family incomes rose more slowly and inflation and higher interest rates reduced affordability levels. A graph of the chronological progress of the two numbers—median house price and median affordability—would show that until the late sixties the two lines climbed side by side, affordability above and price below. Then they began to converge, until finally, at the end of the decade, they crossed, and moved apart. The median price of a house began to exceed what a median-income family could afford.

The percentage of American households that owned their homes started to decline. The decline was small, but it was the first decline in fifty years. Throughout the 1980s the rate fluctuated, which led some observers to discount the idea that anything important had taken

place. Nevertheless, after an all-time peak of 65.6 percent around 1980, ownership had fallen to 63.8 percent by 1988, and among the age group traditionally associated with buying a first home, people aged twenty-five to twenty-nine, last year it stood at 35.4 percent, a drop of eight percentage points since the previous decade. For this group the American dream of homeownership has been severely compromised.

The third and most important event was the October, 1973, energy crisis, with an aftershock during the 1980s. The streetcar, the elevated train, the commuter railroad, and the automobile had made inexpensive suburban land available to housing developers, and the rapid proliferation of single-family houses on large individual plots had been possible only because the rate of car ownership in the United States had been high ever since the 1920s. But for a short time during the winter of 1973 the world seemed to be turned upside down, and there was much talk of moving back to the city and of the benefits of energy conservation and mass transit. Eventually cars became smaller and cheaper to operate, home-insulation retrofitting suddenly became a lucrative small industry, and energy efficiency became a selling feature of new houses, though residential development continued to depend on the automobile just as much as before. Fuel prices declined, and things seemed to be back to normal.

The aftershock came in the form of a series of scientific disclosures about the deteriorating state of the physical environment, particularly global warming. Family cars, as well as power plants, were among the chief sources of carbon-dioxide emissions, so dependence on automobiles was seen as a problem once again. The more general issues of conservation of energy, physical resources, and land were also again raised, and critics were quick to point out that the suburban house lavishly consumed all three. The abundant resources that accounted for the success of the large single-family suburban house—unlimited land, cheap transportation, and plentiful energy—can no longer be taken for granted.

When Houses Bulked Out

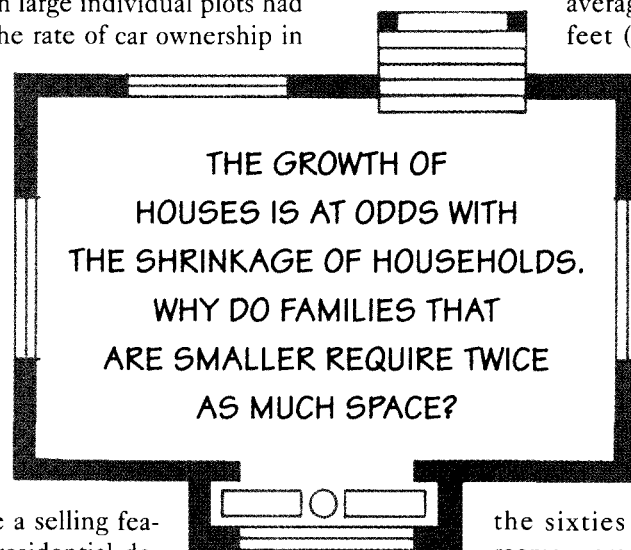
A SHORT HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN HOUSE SINCE 1950 would have to include a chapter called "Bigger and Better." The Levittown house had two bedrooms, one small bathroom, and an eat-in kitchen; all its rooms were arranged on a concrete slab whose dimensions were twenty-five by thirty feet (an un-

finished attic was often converted into additional living space). William Levitt's strategy becomes apparent if one compares his house with earlier designs for modestly priced houses, such as those included in *Homes of Character*, a pattern book published in 1923 by the Boston architect Robert L. Stevenson. The porches, vestibules, entry halls, and dining rooms (or at least dining alcoves) that were standard domestic amenities in the twenties were absent from the Levittown house, which lacked even a basement. It was bare-bones living.

The prosperity of the next two decades was an opportunity to recover some of the lost space. Not surprisingly, new houses increased in size. In 1963 the average new house had 1,450 square feet (the Levittown house had 750 square feet), and over the next decade another 200 square feet, the equivalent of two bedrooms, were added. According to the National Association of Home Builders, the average finished area of a new single-family house in 1989 was about 2,000 square feet, and thousands of houses were even bigger, often 3,000 to 4,000 square feet.

Houses became bigger in the sixties and seventies both because rooms were larger and because there were more of them. Kitchen appliances such as dishwashers, food processors, and microwave ovens required larger, more elaborate kitchens with more counter space. Bathrooms proliferated throughout the house: powder rooms, guest bathrooms, private bathrooms attached to bedrooms and equipped with whirlpool baths and separate shower stalls. By 1972 half of all new houses contained two or more bathrooms. Ten years later nearly three quarters did. It became customary for each child to have his or her own bedroom, and for the parents' room to be larger than the others (in Stevenson's plans there were no "master" bedrooms—all bedrooms were roughly the same size). During the sixties most houses augmented the traditional living room with a family room, or rec room. This allowed greater informality in living arrangements—a place for children to play, and a place to put the television. The rec room was also a sign of the growing privatization of family life, which was a reaction to the disintegration of the public realm. The home was becoming the chief locale for family leisure, as it had been in Victorian times.

In a consumer society, houses not only shelter people but also are warehouses full of furniture, clothes, toys, sports equipment, and gadgets. It is a measure of the growth of consumerism that one of the things that immediately dates a house of the 1920s is how little storage



space it has. In the 1920s a bedroom cupboard three feet wide was considered sufficient; today most bedrooms have a wall-to-wall closet, and master bedrooms are incomplete if they do not have an extended walk-in closet, often grandiloquently called a dressing room. There may be fewer people in the American house of the nineties, but there are a lot more things.

There is a price to be paid for this expansion, however. Bigger houses mean more time and money spent on cleaning and maintenance—work traditionally performed by women. Betty Friedan characterized the single-family suburban house as a “domestic trap.” The bigger the house, the bigger the trap. Even if one maintains that house-proud homemakers are satisfied to trade their free time for extra housework, what about the many women who now also work outside the home? In *The Second Shift*, Arlie Hochschild studied working couples and found that, on average, women performed three quarters of the housework. She estimated that during the 1960s and 1970s housework and child care accounted for roughly fifteen hours a week of extra work for the working

woman. Obviously, working women are ill served by the larger house.

The growth in the size of houses is also at odds with the shrinkage in the size of households. Why do families that are, on average, smaller require twice as much space? To some extent the expanding American house reflects a crude, bigger-is-better mentality. Homeownership is a sign of social accomplishment and status, and just as the most prestigious cars were once the Cadillac and the Continental, which served as models for cheaper (but equally bloated) Fords and Chevrolets, the houses of the wealthy—in particular, Hollywood celebrities, whose sprawling Beverly Hills villas were prominently featured in fan magazines—were what the average tract house strove to imitate.

The increase in the size of the average new house, and in the level of amenities it contained, naturally cost money, and prices rose accordingly. Of course, the homebuilding industry was propelled by the same economic imperatives that drove the automobile industry, and found it profitable to furnish the market with more-expensive houses. And like the automobile manufacturers, builders resisted reducing the size of their product dramatically—even when inflation, higher interest rates, and low household incomes (especially those of single-parent families headed by women) suggested that it might be reasonable to do so.

When land prices, labor costs, or commercial interest rates rise, the builder passes the increase on to the buyer and raises the selling price of the house. If car prices rise too steeply, a prospective buyer has the choice of spending less and buying secondhand. But houses are not cars. Not only do older houses not depreciate in value but their selling price is affected by the general housing market. If new houses cost more, then so do old houses, even though they were built years before, with less expensive labor, less expensive materials, and cheap money. Hence the higher the cost of new housing the more difficult it is to become a homeowner, and the more beneficial it is to be one already. Expensive housing means that a few people lose but a lot of people gain.

Theoretically, prices should eventually drop as a result of reduced demand. However, unlike car prices, over time house prices have so far proved remarkably resistant to declines in demand. (A theory newly gaining prominence holds that house prices will never again be impervious to the rest of the economy.) Many homeowners who are selling a house prefer to wait rather than reduce their asking price significantly. The nature of the homebuilding industry is also a factor. Large merchant builders have diversified into related fields such as property development and commercial and industrial building. When demand falters, they are more likely to shift the focus of their construction activities than to lower prices. But most builders are small. More than half of all the residential builders in the United States build fewer than ten

EARTH DAY STORY

I remember the dusty floorboards of wood in the streetcar
Of the Minneapolis Street Railway Company
And the varnished yellow banquettes of tight-knit rattan
Worn smooth by decades of passengers
The worn gleaming brass grips at the corners of the seats
And the motorman's little bell
Windows trembling in their casings as we crossed the
avenue
Liberty dimes falling softly into the steel-rimmed
hourglass
The gnarled hand of the motorman near.
My grandmother arranged herself against the seat
Her back as straight as a soldier's beside me
Her navy hat with velvet band
And net veil down making her head seem distant
Her dreaming smile and the patient Roman nose
A repose so deep; from my place
I watched her when we rode like princes
Rattling past traffic stopped on the granite cobbles
Riding downtown together, my hand in hers:
All that so much
That I love yet but feel no sadness for, that
Time crossed out like the trolley tracks taken up
Or entombed under the pliant blacktop of the modernized.

—Stephen Sandy

JOHN CAMPBELL stopped preparing tax returns for a living in 1978, when he got into the car business. Now president of the Campbell Automotive Group in Southern California, John is one of the leading car dealers in the country. Here, John talks about a new challenge—becoming a Saturn retailer and building four new Saturn stores. Which should keep his accountant very busy.

“...Going from being a Certified Public Accountant to a car dealer, now that was a switch. I mean, being an accountant is a respected



profession, generally. It's right up there on the 'people you trust' list.

And car dealers? Well, you can guess. You know, I'd go to a party, and people would ask what I do, and I'd say, 'I'm a car dealer,' and they'd change the subject. I guess it just comes with the

territory. But it sure took some getting used to.

When I first heard about Saturn, I had my import stores, and I thought, well, Saturn's going to be another small car, and there're already too many of those, so why bother?

Then I heard something that really surprised me. Usually, if you have the money and the right location, you can get a dealership.

I've never known a car company to reject dealer applicants because of their customer service records.

Not the way Saturn did. Something like three thousand people applied to be Saturn retailers. And I think only around two hundred will actually make it.

If these guys didn't meet their retailer standards, Saturn flat turned them down.

I'll tell you what, that got my attention.

Southern California is a very tough market and I'm opening four Saturn stores.

I can't say anything stronger than that....”

A DIFFERENT KIND of COMPANY. A DIFFERENT KIND of CAR.

If you'd like to know more about Saturn, and our new sedans and coupe, please call us at 1-800-522-5000.



houses a year. They operate with low overhead and few if any permanent employees; when prices soften, it is easy for them to cut back and wait until things improve, or simply to take a vacation.

The American dream of becoming a homeowner is so compelling that for a long time rising prices were slow to discourage demand; and as prices rose, banks and savings-and-loan companies made it easier to borrow money. The rule of thumb traditionally used by lenders to evaluate the financial capabilities of prospective home-buyers was that housing costs (mortgage payments, taxes, and utilities) should not consume more than 25 percent of the household's income. By the 1980s, as house prices began to rise faster than incomes and this trend began to encourage borrowing, the percentage was adjusted upward: to 30 percent, then 35 percent, and sometimes almost as high as 40 percent.

The rationale was that higher housing costs were being offset by the appreciation in the resale value of the property. This view had some validity, since houses were rapidly increasing in value, but it was a saving on paper, available only in the future, when the house was sold. In the meantime, the homeowner was obliged to tighten his belt and spend less—on recreation, travel, education, culture, books. Many people simply borrowed more to make up the difference. No wonder that credit cards became so popular, and so widely abused. Homeownership was being maintained, more or less, but at what price?

The House That Worked

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITIES COMPOSED of freestanding houses surrounded by gardens was entirely American. Before 1840 American cities and towns followed the European model: attached or row houses were built side by side, on narrow lots, facing the street. This type of house first appeared in walled European towns in the Middle Ages, and it survived in various forms for the next 500 years. Seventeenth-century Dutch towns, Baroque Paris, Georgian London, and the Victorian industrial city were all composed almost exclusively of row houses—it was simply the way that towns, and villages, too, were made.

The row house proved remarkably adaptable to various social circumstances. The lower floor of a medieval row house was devoted to commerce or manufacturing, the upper floors to living. Rich people lived in large, wide houses; the poor lived in smaller, narrower ones. Sometimes the two classes shared the same house—in Regency terraces, the basement was given over to kitchens and servants' quarters, and the owners lived above. The Parisian town house carried social stratification further: the ground floor was usually a shop; the first floor contained a grand apartment; the upper floors contained less expensive lodgings, with lower ceilings; and at the top of

the stairs, in the garret below the roof, were the cheapest rooms.

A similar adaptability was evident in the American row house, which was where people lived in all the Eastern Seaboard cities. The so-called Philadelphia bandbox was a tiny row house, ten to sixteen feet wide, built for renting to recent immigrants; on fashionable Society Hill the houses were wider and grander but were also built in rows. The standard American city lot was about twenty-five feet wide, a dimension that could conveniently accommodate a living room and a hallway on the lower floor and two bedrooms above. New York had its brownstones, Boston the streets of Beacon Hill, and Baltimore rows of modest brick houses. As in Europe, the row house was not found only in cities. The Colonial Delaware town of New Castle, for example, was scarcely more than a large village, but many of the houses were row houses, which still give the historic district an urban, and an urbane, air.

What produced the narrow row house in America was not a concern for security, as in the medieval European town, nor was it merely urban crowding. The row house kept walking distances short, true, but more important, it defined city life in a congenial and satisfying way. One has the impression that just as people enjoyed the bustle of the city streets and squares, they also liked the gregariousness of living in relatively close proximity, in compact, well-defined neighborhoods.

As the Columbia University historian Kenneth T. Jackson recounts in his history of suburbanization, *Crabgrass Frontier*, the freestanding house began to supplant the row house as the preferred American housing type sometime between 1840 and 1870. Cities were becoming noisy and congested. Immigration from Europe was on the increase: Italians, Poles, and Russians, ethnically and religiously different and usually poor, crowded into the cities, and so did blacks from the South. Horse-drawn vehicles jammed the streets. Poor sanitation—there were no sewers, and many people still relied on wells for water—produced periodic outbreaks of cholera. Coal-fired industrialization produced eye-watering pollution. One remedy, if you could afford it, was to escape to the suburbs.

The move to the suburbs was not merely reactionary. It had also to do with a new appreciation for the outdoors and the desire to live in a more natural setting—or, more specifically, as Jackson says, to live in a house with a yard. The British country house had provided the British landed gentry with a garden setting for several centuries. What was new was the provision of such homes to large numbers of people, at first members of the upper-middle class, and later average working families. The traditional row house was built either directly on the sidewalk or a few feet behind it—there was no room for a front lawn. Nor was there really a back yard. The small space behind the house was taken up with stables, service buildings, and privies; since there was no garbage collection, it was

also a place to dump refuse. Even where land was available, city gardens were rare. When people wanted to go out of the house, they went into the street, or they promenaded in a public park.

The yard reflected a desire for private leisure space—croquet and lawn tennis became favorite pastimes in the mid-nineteenth century—and a wish to isolate domestic life from the public world. Instead of stoops, which were really a part of the street, the early suburban houses had porches, which were definitely a part of the house and were separated from the sidewalk by expanses of lawn.

The earliest planned suburbs, such as Riverside (1869), outside Chicago, and Forest Hills Gardens (1913), nine miles from Manhattan, were so-called streetcar suburbs,

linked to the city by railroad or streetcar lines. Since people were expected to walk home from the station, distances had to be kept short, and these new communities were relatively compact. They housed more than thirty people an acre, which was a population density a third that of the crowded city. The later automobile suburb had no such constraints, and could be more expansive. Broad streets and large lots with generous setbacks all reduced densities.

Levittown, despite its small houses, accommodated only about fifteen people on an acre. As houses and plots increased in size during the postwar period, densities dropped lower and lower. A typical suburban density today is never higher than ten people an acre, and often even lower.

My point is not that land is being “wasted” but rather that the low density of suburban housing has produced some undesirable effects. Downtown land costs more than it did in the past, of course, because there is a limited supply and an increasing demand. It is less obvious why peripheral land, the supply of which increases exponentially as the city’s circumference grows, should cost more. One explanation is that the cheapest land in convenient locations was bought up first, and now that it is no longer available, developers are obliged to acquire higher-quality real estate. Another is a change in the way land improvements are paid for. In the past the cost of building new roads and sewers came out of a municipality’s general revenues—that is, it was absorbed by all taxpayers. Today the increasingly prevalent practice is for a municipality to levy development charges directly on the developer, who must pay these costs before starting construction. In some cases development charges also contain additional payments (“impact fees”), which are in

effect an entrance tax. These extra charges, and the cost of financing them, are passed directly on to the buyer in the form of a higher land price, and so is the cost of what is now a large number of necessary permits and the time expended in acquiring them. In 1949 the cost of land typically represented about 11 percent of the selling price of a new house; in 1988, though houses were much larger and better appointed, land cost accounted for more than a quarter of the selling price.

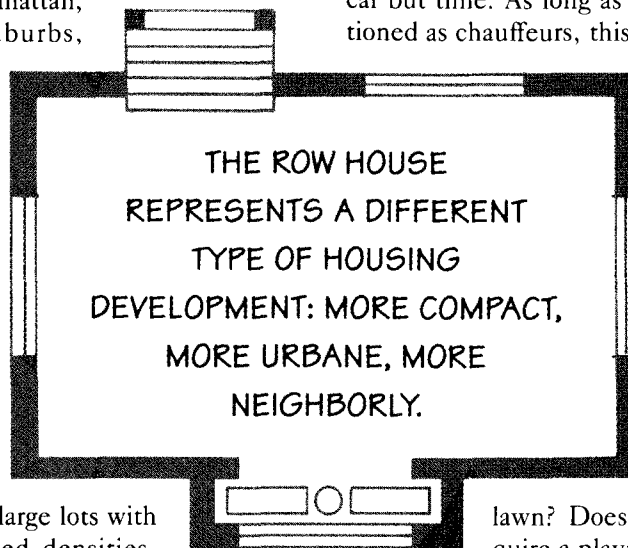
It hardly needs saying that a community of sprawling houses on large lots is going to mean a lot of driving. Shops, schools, libraries, swimming pools, and day-care centers are spread out; to reach them requires not only a car but time. As long as women stayed home and functioned as chauffeurs, this liability could be overcome.

The typical suburban home is a house of a unique type that emerged in response to a particular need, which it fulfilled, I would say, in exemplary fashion. But there is no reason to believe that it has the versatility to adapt to different circumstances. It is ill suited, for example, to smaller and more heterogeneous households. Does a working single parent really want a large

lawn? Does a couple without children require a playroom, and if both work, do they have the time to clean and maintain a large house?

It is not clear what will happen to the large suburban houses of the sixties and seventies as families shrink and heating and transportation costs rise. Basements with separate entries sometimes contain small apartments, but ranch houses are not easily converted from single to multiple occupancy. The row house, in contrast, has shown itself to be extremely versatile. A Philadelphia bandbox, once inhabited by three families, is now home to one; a Boston Back Bay row house on Commonwealth Avenue that once housed one large family now houses three professional couples. Family row houses in Manhattan have been subdivided into small apartments, and are also used as offices and shops.

A final word on the row house. It represents a different type of house, but it also implies a different type of housing development: more compact, more urbane, more neighborly. Today such a development would have a variety of houses for different households: single-family houses, cottages, and walk-up apartments, as well as row houses. Considerably denser than current suburban developments (though not necessarily much denser than the first streetcar suburbs) and incorporating many features associated with traditional American towns, like commercial space as well as residential, public greens,



and well-defined streets, such communities would be characterized by social and economic mixing rather than homogeneity. They would be scaled to the pedestrian rather than to the driver, reducing, though not eliminating, dependence on the automobile. They would also reflect the variety of the American family and would provide a wider range of economic choices than the present single, uniform housing solution.

The Advantages of the Small House

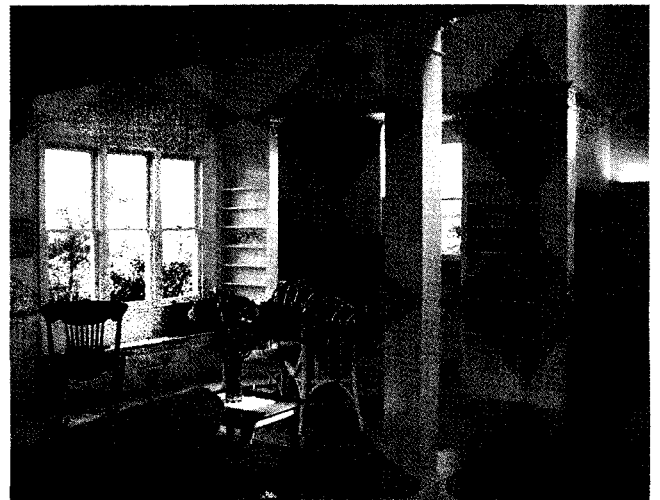
THE SIMPLEST WAY TO BUILD LESS EXPENSIVE houses is to build them smaller, not differently. Smaller houses have fewer bathrooms, smaller kitchens with less cabinetwork, which is expensive, and fewer and smaller rooms. The cost of construction is almost directly proportional to the floor area ("almost" because certain costs, such as electrical hookup charges and building-permit and legal fees, remain constant). Because construction time is also proportionately reduced, the contractor's overhead—and profit—likewise go down. Smaller houses have the added advantages of being cheaper to heat and cool and easier to maintain. They also mean less housework, which should appeal particularly to working couples and single parents.

How much smaller? Melanie Taylor, a New Haven architect, has designed several compact family houses, intended for year-round living, some of them as small as 575 square feet. A modestly priced bungalow, designed for a new town near Gulf Shores, Alabama, combines two small bedrooms, a sleeping loft, an open living space, and an eat-in kitchen in only 1,100 square feet; additional space is provided by a front porch. Other Taylor houses, many of which have a faintly Victorian air, were featured in several national magazines, and proved so popular that the architect was obliged to prepare stock plans for national distribution. In San Francisco the architect Donald MacDonald has successfully built and marketed tiny row houses of 600 to 960 square feet, including garages. These inexpensive—by San Francisco standards (about \$165,000)—urban cottages challenge what MacDonald calls "the mythology of space," and compensate for their small size by incorporating oversize windows, skylights, fireplaces, soundproofing, and gardens. Last summer the architect unveiled an even smaller house, intended for a single person or a parent with a small child. It contains only 240 square feet of space but includes a fireplace, a sleeping loft, and a fully equipped kitchen with dishwasher.

The MacDonald house probably represents the extreme limit—the housing equivalent of the micro-car. A less radical departure is the compact house of about 1,000 square feet, within which it is possible to accommodate comfortably two or three bedrooms, one and a half bathrooms, and a basement that permits rooms to be added



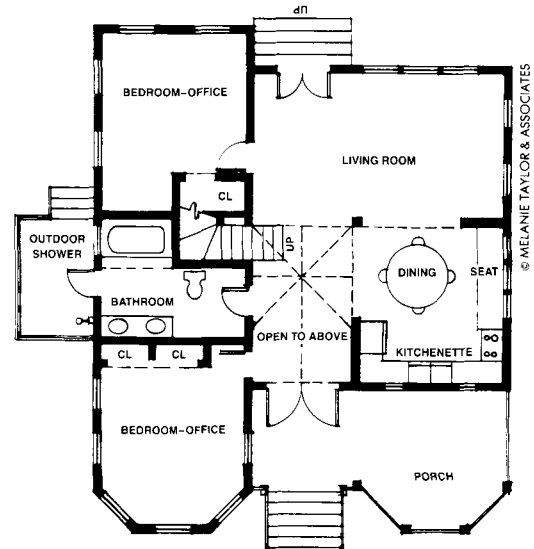
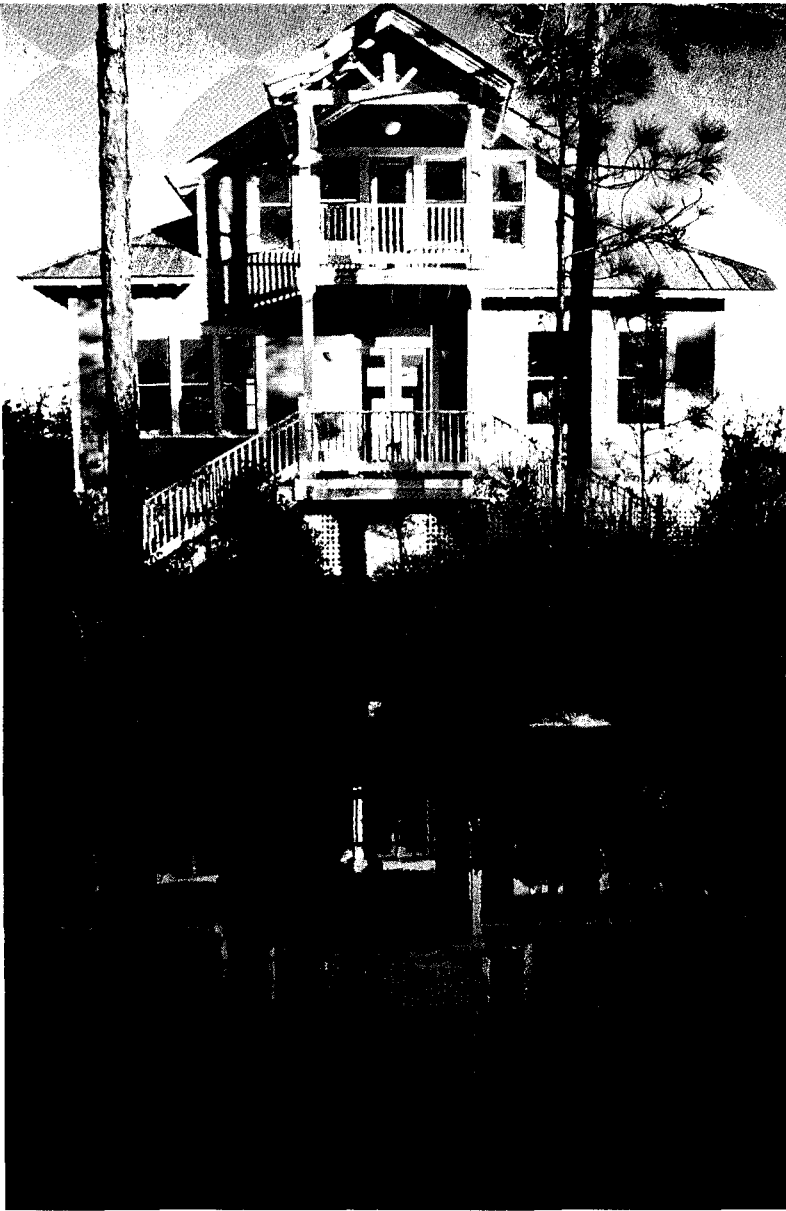
GEORGE COUNARES (THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE)



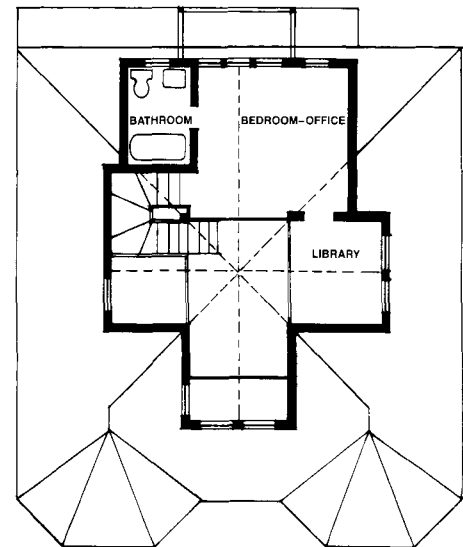
This 1,100-square-foot house, designed by the architect Melanie Taylor for a new beach town in Alabama, appears to be much bigger. The front entrance (top) and dining-kitchen area (above) are on the lower level; hidden from the street, the main bedroom is on the upper level, with a porch overlooking the water (right).

later. Such a house is about half the size (and construction cost) of the average new single-family house built last year, although it is still larger than Levitt's 750-square-foot Cape Cod model. Considering that the latter often accommodated a family of five, 1,000 square feet for two or three people seems adequate—by the standards of most European countries, even generous. Such smaller houses, sometimes called starter houses, would appeal to singles, couples, young families, and also older couples whose children have moved away from home. Altogether a large market.

Reducing the floor area does not mean forsaking modern standards of comfort and convenience. There will have to be more and better-appointed bathrooms than in the small bungalows of the past, and ingenious, space-saving storage systems. The miniaturization that has been accomplished in electronics (smaller televisions, smaller



LOWER LEVEL



UPPER LEVEL

audio equipment, smaller appliances) makes it easier to achieve high levels of domestic amenity in small spaces. If home automation, in which a single electrical cable provides power, audio, television, security, telephone, and thermostat, becomes common, as seems likely, it will further increase domestic convenience regardless of space. Like the Japanese car, the small house may start as an economic measure and finish as a luxury product.

Attempts at Industrialization

WOULDn'T IT BE PREFERABLE, RATHER THAN making houses smaller, simply to build them more efficiently and cheaply by industrializing the building process? This was the rationale for Operation Breakthrough, which was announced by the Nixon Administration in 1969. Its aim

was to enlist large corporations such as General Electric and TRW in a national effort to develop radically new ways of building housing, using industrial methods, mass production, and innovative materials. A nation that could put a man on the moon could surely improve on traditional stick-built houses. By 1974, however, Operation Breakthrough had collapsed, partly as a result of a lack of political will but chiefly because the industrial giants were unable to produce a markedly better house at a lower price.

Independent of government efforts an industrialized housing industry has developed, and it includes pre-cut, panelized, and modular homes. Although these forms of building have been in existence for several decades, they have been unable to capture more than about 10 to 15 percent of the new-housing market, according to figures released by the National Association of Home Builders.

Industrialized housing can be erected quickly, and it is usually of high quality. But industrialization has not significantly reduced the construction cost of the house. One problem is the investment in plant and equipment which must be added to the selling price of the house, and the cost of weathering the ups and downs of the home-building industry. Other reasons that conventional construction predominates include the low cost of on-site labor in many areas and the paperwork required by a multitude of state and local building codes and regulations when manufacturers ship prefabricated components.

One type of factory-made housing has been consistently successful in reducing production costs: the mobile home. During the early 1970s mobile homes made up a third of all new single-family houses, although this figure has now dropped by about half. Mobile homes are small (usually less than 1,000 square feet), have traditionally used inexpensive interior and exterior materials, and are entirely produced in factories (primarily by nonunion labor). The need to transport the product from factory to site imposes severe restrictions on its height and width,

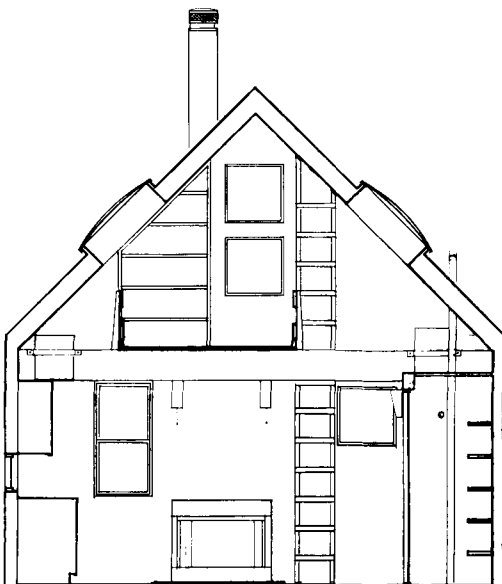
however, and a mobile home inevitably resembles a long shoebox. It is not a shape that can be happily integrated into most traditional neighborhoods. About two thirds of mobile homes are situated on rented land, the majority in commercial parks. While the separation of homeownership from landownership is part of what makes the mobile home affordable, it is also a disadvantage. In contrast to a conventional house, a mobile home usually does not rapidly appreciate in value, a fact that in the long run can offset its lower selling price.

Industrialized housing was prominent in postwar Europe and in countries such as the Soviet Union and Sweden, but it made little headway in the United States. The chief reason was, and continues to be, that the lightweight wood-frame house (which in its present form is unique to North America) is already a highly industrialized product. Indeed, it is much more industrialized than the often crude concrete building systems of Eastern Europe. Conventional American houses consist almost exclusively of bits and pieces that have been manufactured in factories and quickly assembled on the site. The ex-

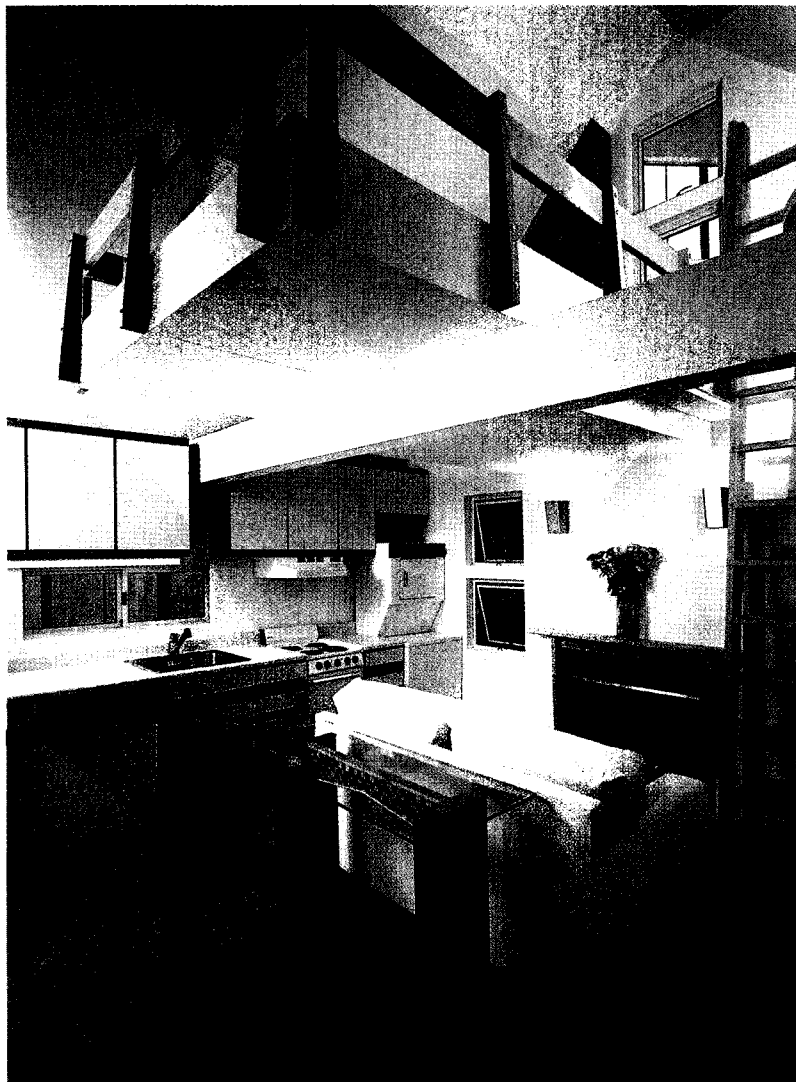
RICHARD SEXTON



MACDONALD ARCHITECTS



Donald MacDonald designed a tiny model Starter Home, which in 240 square feet includes a full kitchen and fireplace (right); the plan (above) shows the sleeping loft with skylights. At top, San Francisco row houses, all under 1,000 square feet.



MAGNUS STARK

tent of this industrialization can be shown by a short list of the technical innovations that have become commonplace during the postwar period: factory-made wooden roof trusses (introduced in 1952), pre-hung doors and windows, gypsum wallboard, aluminum and vinyl siding, plywood, plastic plumbing, fiberglass insulation bats, rigid-foam-insulation sheathing, sealed glazing units and low-emissivity glass, plastic vapor barriers and moisture barriers in wide rolls, ready-mix concrete, and also labor-saving devices such as paint rollers, power tools, powered staplers and nailing guns, small cranes, and forklifts. The most recent changes include metal-and-wood-composite substitutes for traditional solid-wood studs and joists.

The result of these improvements is apparent both in a higher quality of construction and in a reduced amount of on-site labor, whose cost now accounts for only a small fraction of the selling price of a new house—about 15 percent, as compared with 30 percent in 1949. Thus the potential for reducing cost by increasing the degree of prefabrication or by introducing automation is small. Does industrialization produce less-expensive houses? Yes. The difficulty in proposing industrialization as a strategy for reducing housing cost is that to a large degree it has already happened.

Less Land, More Do-It-Yourself

ONE ADVANTAGE OF SMALLER HOUSES IS THAT they can be placed on smaller lots. A modest one-story tract house typically needs a sixty-foot-wide lot—that is, each house usually requires sixty feet of sidewalk, roadway, sewer and water line, and storm sewer. A narrower, two-story cottage can be built on a forty-foot-wide lot, immediately reducing these costs by a third. A semi-detached house requires even less frontage—thirty feet. Such housing incorporates all the desired features of suburban life—individual houses, gardens, decks, natural surroundings—but on a reduced scale. Row houses, which can be built on twenty-foot-wide lots, have a more dramatic impact on land cost and density; infrastructure cost is reduced by two thirds. With more people living closer together it is possible to plan neighborhoods with local stores, and walking rather than driving becomes a real option.

When affordability is a priority, it is possible to consider extremely narrow lots, less than twenty feet wide. In Victorian London, row houses were classified into four types, depending on lot width: twenty feet, eighteen feet, sixteen feet, and fifteen feet. In the famous Weissenhof Housing Exhibition, held in Stuttgart in 1927, the Dutch architect J.J.P. Oud built a row of houses each eighteen feet wide. Le Corbusier designed several projects with extremely narrow houses, and some of his ideas are visible in a Swiss housing cooperative, Siedlung Halen, built outside Bern in 1961; there the row houses are only sixteen feet wide.

Denser neighborhoods would have a considerable effect on the environment: Less automobile travel would mean fewer roadways, and less energy invested in community infrastructure. Row houses, which share walls with their neighbors, provide savings in building materials, because only the narrow front and back facades are exposed to the weather. A two-story row house has only about one third the exterior wall area of a bungalow, and about half the roof area, and so heating and air-conditioning costs are reduced accordingly.

Smaller lots would also mean more-compact communities. Not only would these encourage walking but the higher concentration of people would make possible more local services such as day-care centers and shops. Many of the advantages of nineteenth-century town life could be recovered. Higher-density housing would provide a range of choices and opportunities for face-to-face contact between people. I realize that much of this goes against the grain of current preferences for privacy and economically homogeneous communities, but given a choice people might enjoy variety and neighborliness.

THE PRESENT HOUSING MARKET IS CHARACTERIZED by many types of households. Home buyers include single people, either unmarried or between marriages, with or without children; and couples, married and unmarried, childless or with young children or, as is increasingly common, with grown-up children who are living at home. All these different groups have different needs, resources, and priorities. The small but growing number of people who work at home need offices or workrooms; people with small children need playrooms; people with elderly parents need a guest room, preferably on the ground floor; childless couples may prefer large open spaces; parents with noisy teenagers need separate rooms.

One way to accommodate this diversity is to leave part of the house unpartitioned—in effect, to create a loft space. An unpartitioned second floor is an idea that worked when William Levitt introduced the unfinished attic in his Cape Cod house, and it is still useful in reducing the initial construction cost of a house. Future bathroom connections can easily be provided for. The homeowner can choose to use the loft as a single open space or build partitions as required and as financial resources permit.

Many North American males—and, increasingly, females as well—grow up learning rudimentary carpentry skills as a matter of course. Although we take these abilities for granted, they represent a national trait, which is shared by few societies. The growth in the number of home-improvement centers attests to the popularity of the do-it-yourself movement. These stores sell a variety of tools, building materials, and electrical and plumbing supplies. Many of the products, such as adhesive floor tiles, plastic water pipes, and pre-assembled doors and

windows, are specifically designed for home installation. In addition, there are shelves of plans, handbooks, and step-by-step manuals that cover every aspect of building construction. Traditionally the basement has served as the place for do-it-yourself additions and modifications to the home, and the use of flexible space has a long and tested history.

In 1961 John Habraken, a young Dutch architect, published a small book, later translated into English, in which he proposed an approach to mass housing based on a separation of what became known as supports and infill. Habraken's proposal called for support structures to be built by contractors and for the infill, which includes interior partitions, bathrooms, kitchens, closets, and sometimes even exterior walls, to be bought separately by the occupant, much as furniture is bought—to suit the buyer's personal taste and pocketbook. This strategy, which was developed with multi-story buildings in mind but was also applied to row houses, attracted international attention, and brought Habraken to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as the head of the architecture department. Although a small number of housing projects derived from the support-infill model were built in Holland, the idea never really caught on. The chief drawback was that a wide range of infill products, such as demountable walls and relocatable plumbing systems, were simply not available on the market.

Habraken's proposal was ambitious and complicated, requiring the development of too many new products at once. It also required that architects exert less control over the design process. Nevertheless, something like the support-infill approach could produce housing that is more adaptable and affordable. It would be possible to provide houses without built-in kitchen cabinets and closets, for example, as has long been the custom in Europe. This would leave the homeowner free to choose how much, and of what type, to install—big or little, fancy or plain, expensive or cheap.

This freedom to choose would have several benefits. First, the quality of finish carpentry and cabinetwork, which can vary considerably, would be left to the discretion of the homeowner. He or she could choose an inexpensive kitchen, for example, and replace it later with something better. Or a few high-quality cabinets could be bought initially and added to as more money became available. A handyman might decide to do the work himself. A large number of home-furnishings outlets, like Conran's-Habitat, now sell knocked-down or partly assembled modular furniture, or, like IKEA, even sell kitchen cabinets and counters in a wide variety of styles, materials, and finishes.

Couples could install two sinks in the bathroom; working couples who eat out could install small kitchens. Clotheshorses could put in more closets; readers could have more bookshelves. It would be possible to use space more efficiently in small houses by placing storage ele-

ments only where they were required—small closets in the guest room, toy chests in the playroom—and moving them as family needs changed.

Finally, there is the benefit of separating the cost of cabinetwork from the construction cost of the house. Finish work is time-consuming and costly for the contractor, and often causes delays and customer dissatisfaction. The efficiency of construction would be increased by cutting out finish work from the building process; the size of the down payment and of monthly mortgage payments would be reduced accordingly.

THE CHIEF OBSTACLE TO SMALLER HOUSES ON smaller lots is not the consumer, nor is it the home-building industry. It is those of us who already own our homes. Municipalities, reflecting the attitude of homeowners, have staunchly resisted the idea of modifying zoning regulations to permit the construction of smaller homes, or to allow the subdivision of land into smaller plots. The chief reason is, sadly, selfish: smaller, less expensive houses are perceived as a threat to property values and to community status, even though housing in the \$50,000–\$80,000 range is still accessible only to solid middle-class citizens.

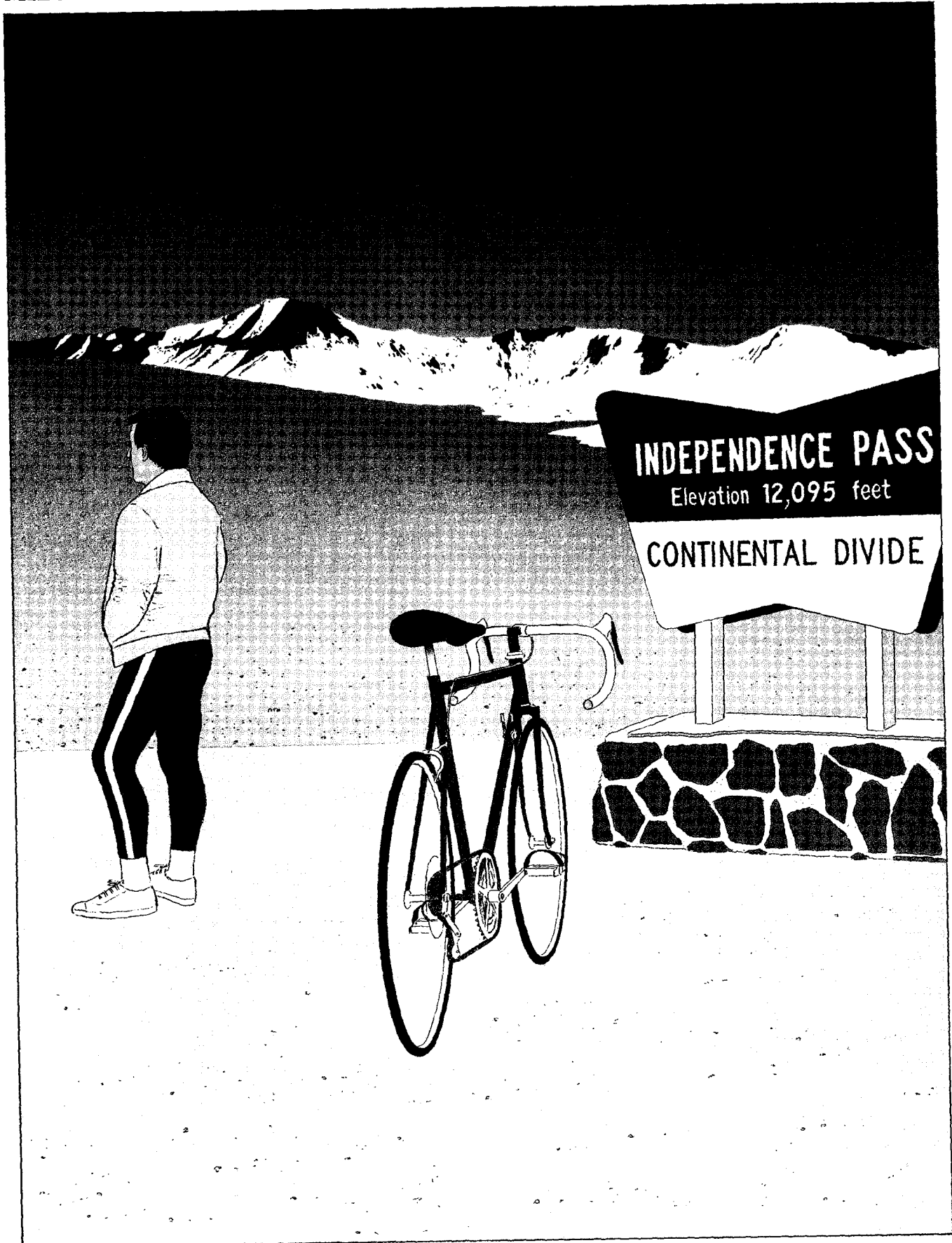
Despite the heightened awareness of environmental issues and wide opposition to nuclear power, the environmental advantages of more-compact neighborhoods have yet to enter the public consciousness. Many of the same people who extol the virtues of bicycling and of composting lawn clippings are up in arms whenever denser development is proposed. The institution of no-growth legislation by many towns exacerbates the housing problem, because it places quotas on the number of new houses that can be built each year and effectively guarantees that developers will build only large, luxurious houses.

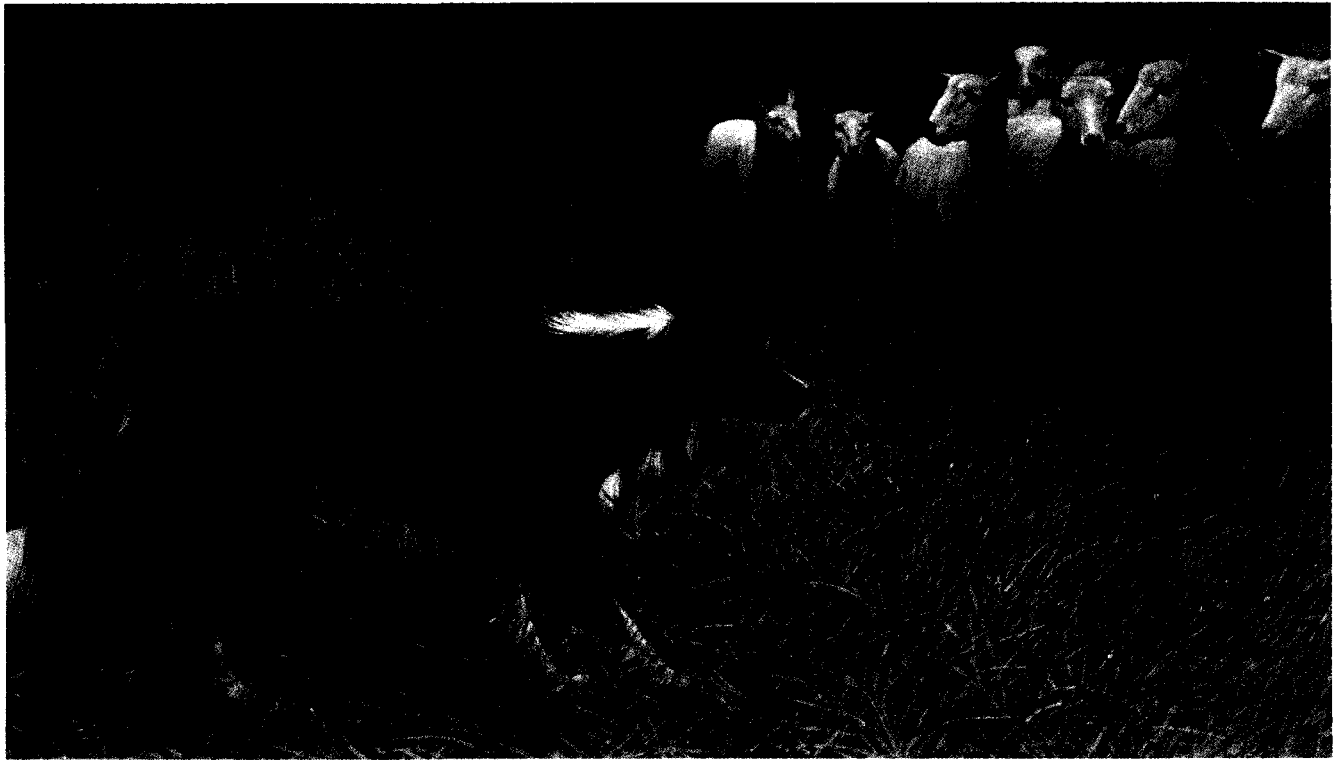
Exclusionary zoning regulations create economically and demographically skewed neighborhoods. There are already signs that at least some communities are realizing that restrictive zoning may not in the long run be in their interests. First-time buyers eventually become second-time buyers, and towns that do not provide starter houses risk losing young families who would otherwise establish roots in the community. The lack of housing choices has other bad consequences, as when, for example, public employees like firemen and policemen can no longer live where they work, or when schoolteachers, nurses, and other important but low-paid professionals must commute long distances.

One can only hope that a more generous attitude will prevail, an attitude that recognizes that a new and different generation of prospective homeowners, faced with higher interest rates, energy costs, and land prices, is obliged to consider housing solutions different from those that were available to their parents. This is no cause for alarm. It may be an opportunity to attain better—and more livable—towns and cities. □

MIDDLE

BY GUY BILLOUT





A Working Dog

Border collies are bred for stamina, obedience, range, and a willingness to tend sheep

by Donald McCaig

IT'S ALWAYS HOT at Oatlands Plantation in late spring. After their runs the dogs flop in a water trough, lapping and panting. Oatlands is the final trial in Virginia's Triple Crown, a week-long series of sheepdog trials, the most important on America's East Coast. Though border collies have worked stock in this country since the 1840s, sheepdog trialing is a fairly new sport, and hundreds of trials are less than ten years old. In Britain trialists are full-time shepherds and farmers. Here perhaps a quarter are livestock men; others are vets, machinists, sheep shearers, and psychiatrists, who keep sheep only for the sake of their dogs.

Some have traveled far to get here, and the campers and motor homes

parked behind Oatlands's narrow course bear license plates from Texas, Montana, and Maine. Not much prize money is offered—only the top few dogs can hope to earn even gas money. But the Triple Crown is a chance to run your dog against the best sixty-six dogs in the country, against dangerous competitors, men (and a few women) whose conversation with their dogs is intricate, flashing, and profound.

The first two-day trial of the Triple Crown was the Blue Ridge, near Winchester. The midweek trial was Seclusion, below Charlottesville. By the time we got to Oatlands, we handlers were worn to a soft, rumpled ease with one another. Braggarts bragged more quietly about their dogs.

Oatlands Plantation is a National

Trust property, near Leesburg, Virginia, and special events bring thousands of visitors here every weekend. This weekend it's sheepdog trials; by mid-afternoon a thousand spectators will be standing around wondering what in hell is going on.

The course is skinny, bordered by trees, canted left to right uphill. Sheep are put out 360 yards from where you stand at the handler's post. On the course are three sets of white board gates: the fetch, drive, and cross-drive gates. During the trial the sheep must leap a water-filled ditch and must be precisely in line to get through the cross-drive gate.

On the course the sheep are quicksilver, spooked, acting like they've never seen a dog before. When a dog

puts on any pressure, the sheep shoot off, full tilt, and the dog can't keep far enough back to settle them. No dog is doing very well. Scores are in the fifties, out of a possible 100.

Not only is sheepdog trialing a three-species sport—involving human beings, dogs, and sheep—but also every flock of sheep behaves differently. Sheep that are flighty in the morning may by evening be fighting a dog for every foot of gain, lowering their heads, pawing, refusing to go.

Behind the trial course the handlers are shaded by a somber awning supplied by Loudoun Funeral Chapel. We sit on lawn chairs and watch like hawks, critiquing every run.

The border collie, also known as working collie, eye dog, or shepherd's collie, is one of the few pure working breeds left in the world. For 500 years the border collie was bred to herd livestock, particularly sheep. Although a few literary men—Samuel Pepys, Robert Burns, and James Hogg among them—noticed the dog, it went largely unremarked. The border collie belonged to shepherds as surely as shepherds belonged to farmers and farmers belonged to the laird. The British aristocracy valued hunting dogs and coursing dogs. Shepherd's dogs were beneath their notice.

In the 1860s, when the English middle class took up the "dog fancy," they sought "noble" dogs, "proud" dogs, dogs with an "aristocratic bearing." Thus, while popular dog breeds were bred for beauty (the beauty of the show ring), the humble border collie was left in the hands of agriculturists, who bred for biddability, stamina, stock sense, a wide natural outrun, and a strong fetch: incomparable traits when a man is trying to catch a terrified ewe on a steep hillside with only his dog to help him.

Border collies have been called "the wisest dogs in the world," but I'm sure that some border collies are smarter than others. At sheepdog trials I've seen dogs take distinct instructions ("Go left," "Go right," "Stand," "Walk up") at the rate of more than one command a second.

Distance is a critical test of animal control. The circus trainer who jumps his tiger through hoops inside a fifty-foot cage wouldn't have much chance of getting the beast to obey from a hundred yards away. Most pet-dog

owners can control a dog at their feet, but let the dog get away, across the park, hying after a florid female, and the master's calls and threats go unheeded. In Britain border collies routinely work to their shepherd's faint whistles at a distance of more than a mile.

Some male border collies weigh sixty pounds, some bitches less than thirty. Though most are black and white and long-coated, some are short-coated, red, merle, black, or black and tan. Purebred-dog breeders are routinely distressed by this lack of standardization, and every year or two some fool pipes up in favor of American Kennel Club recognition for the border collie. If the dogs were more uniform, the fool explains, they could be shown in the show ring. Breeding working dogs for the show ring makes as much sense as picking a lawyer by the color of his suit.

Eminent border collie sires and dams are sheepdog-trial winners. The first such trial was held in Bala, Wales, in 1873, and today sheepdog trials are held in all the major sheep-producing countries. The trials more or less replicate the tasks that border collies perform at home. Trials test a dog's physical, mental, moral, and (pardon me) spiritual qualities. Many perfectly adequate farm dogs cannot trial—they're too shy around strangers or simply can't take the pressure. (How would you like to do the toughest bits of your daily work overseen by a hundred critical spectators?)

A few naive spectators always attend these trials. Astonished by the dogs' skills, they often ask, "Are the sheep trained?" No.

"What's the dog's reward?" A job well done.

The trial consists of consecutive tasks: outrun, lift, fetch, drive, pen, and shed. The obstacles on the course are freestanding gates with a twenty-one-foot gap, and a pen six feet by nine feet, also freestanding. The dogs' handler is never permitted to touch the sheep, and his ability to help his dog is circumscribed. The dog must not bite and rarely barks. Points are deducted for faults, rather than earned; when you begin, you have as many points as you'll ever have. At Oatlands each dog has eight minutes to complete his work. The judge and the timekeeper sit behind the handler.

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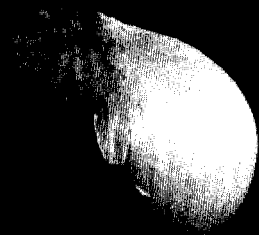
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Often, when a handler and his dog go out onto the course, the dog will dash ahead or circle, looking for sheep. Perhaps the handler will pat his leg or call softly, and the dog will come to his side. This is a time to settle the dog, to see what can be learned as three sheep are herded to the let-out post, 360 yards away. At that distance a handler can't tell much, but he can certainly see if a ewe is trying to bolt, or if the whole lot is fractious. Is a sick or feeble ewe lingering behind?

If you and your dog are right, your souls exchange confidence. The clock starts when you send him.

Outrun: 20 points. What you hope is that the dog will cast out from your foot, widening his approach as he nears the sheep so that he can come up on them from behind without startling them. The dog's life experience determines his gather. He must have strong faith and have learned to delay gratification.

As the dog runs out, any command, by voice or whistle, will cause points to be deducted, and so a man never signals his dog unless to warn of trouble. The dog is racing away from its shepherd toward sheep it has seen or has been cued toward by the shepherd's stance and body language. As the dog goes out, he can easily lose sight of his sheep; in dips and low places he certainly will. The dog's instinct tells him to come in; faith alone keeps him sailing out. If he yields and comes in too soon, he'll cross the course in front of his sheep and lose almost all his outrun points—disaster.

The dog must trust his shepherd to warn him when he's gone too far, when he's gone wrong. He must trust his shepherd's silence and keep on, his course widening, ever widening.

When an inexperienced dog finally spots his sheep, he'll charge, hoping to get to them, and, of course, they bolt like deer. A young ewe can outspurt a dog for a hundred yards. Sometimes a hundred yards and a hiding place are all a ewe needs to beat a dog.

The experienced dog knows that slogging on farther before he turns in, far beyond his ewes, is more effort initially but that nothing less works.

When the dog is behind the sheep, he stops of his own accord or is whistled to a stop.

Lift: 10 points. If the outrun is correct, the sheep notice the dog now and

move toward the handler. This is the lift—a test of perception and a clash of wills. Permit me this analogy: One morning you're walking down the sidewalk, thinking about dailiness—your work, perhaps your spouse's birthday, the postcard you intend to mail—when a car pulls to the curb and a stranger gets out and blocks your path. He is strongly built and exudes menace. Although he carries a weapon, it's not brandished. The stranger is dressed almost entirely in black but with reassuring touches. Perhaps he wears a badge saying SPECIAL CONSTABLE, or SECURITY. The stranger takes a step toward you.

If you are terrified, you might run or fight or bluster. If you are completely unthreatened, you might say, "Excuse me, please," and step around him. If you turn and walk away quietly, it's a perfect lift: full points.

Fetch: 20 points. When the sheep come toward the handler, with the dog trotting behind or to one side, the next portion of the course is an exercise in biddability. After the outrun the handler is allowed to command, and most twitter like birds. The judge deducts points each time the sheep stray off the straight and narrow, or if they pause or hurry. As the sheep come near the handler (and the throng of spectators immediately behind him), a three-species encounter takes place. This is the man's best chance to calm the sheep and the dog. Now he can see if one sheep is older or younger than the others. Which is the flock leader? Are any sheep out of condition or winded? Are they spooked or reconciled to being herded? At the same time, the handler must be preparing himself for a new, very different phase of work: the drive. To the left, a hundred yards ahead, at about ten o'clock, the drive gates await, and once the sheep come around behind the man, the dog aims them straight for the gate opening.

Drive: 30 points. Tight turns are important in trialing, and the nearer the sheep come to the shepherd's feet as they pass around, the better. For the sheep, coming around the man is a great relief. Steadily they've been herded toward the man (danger) and a crowd of spectators (danger), and now, as they start the drive, suddenly dangled is behind them and they bolt away, leaping like lambs in the pleasure of their freedom.

Obedient to every instruction, the dog must herd the sheep directly through the drive gates. Then the dog must whip around to their heads and get them going back across the course through the crossdrive gates, on the man's right, at about two o'clock. As the dog brings the sheep toward the man again, the man walks from the handler's post to the pen.

Pen: 10 points. Time ticking away, the shepherd hurries to the pen. He'll open the gate, clench the gate rope with one hand, and extend his crook with the other. From left to right: crook, man, gate rope, gate—these form an illusory wall blocking the ewes' escape. The pen yawns open.

The sheep know perfectly well that the pen is a trap.

Permit me to resume my analogy: Suppose that the menacing black-clad stranger has followed you for half a mile, walking on one side of the street or the other, never so far back that you can slip away, never so near that you'll run. Now, suppose his car appears, the back door opens, and the stranger says, "In!"

If the handler comes on too strong, the sheep will run around the pen. If the dog presses too hard, they'll duck under the rope or dodge the handler's crook. Although the dog and sheep move freely, the man must not let go of the gate rope. He's tied in place. If sheep waffle at the mouth of the pen, points are deducted. If a ewe breaks around, points are deducted.

The man swings the gate shut, glances at his watch, and turns the sheep out again.

Shed: 10 points. When threatened, sheep, like politicians, press toward the center, the stronger pushing the weaker to left or right. Old, feeble, sickly ewes are left outside the solid, woolly mass for predators to find. Tough on the senior citizens, yes, but as a species-survival strategy it's as good as any.

Man and dog shed one sheep off from the others. Man on one side of the ewes, dog on the other, seeking the opening, just an inch or three, and the man cries the dog in and the dog cuts that single ewe off with the speed and precision of a surgeon's knife. The ewe must not know what you intend, and when she learns she's out there all by herself—*prey*—she must be transfixed by the dog's glowing eyes until her ter-



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The finished diagram contains NO VICIES. Accordingly, SLOTH, LUST, GLUTTONY, COVETOUSNESS, PRIDE, ENVY, and ANGER are banished. Across. 1. YEAGER 5. TAR(PAUL)IN 11. T(R)ENT 12. S(AIL-BOAT) 13. V(IC)ARIOUSLY 14. PRO(VI)-SOS 15. ROW-AN 18. ENDOWING 19. S-HIVE-RED 20. NATAL (double def.) 24. OBESE (hidden) 26. LEAFIEST (anag.) 29. LEA(THE)R'S 31. G(L-O)AT 33. SE(L-F)SAME 35. NORTHE-ASTER (hornet anag.) 36. UN(BELIE)F (fun anag.) 37. TREEN (anag.) 38. O-TOS(COPE)S 39. N(I-NET)Y Down. 1. R(EBIRT)H (rev.) 2. N(ARC)O-TIC (car anag.) 3. HENRI (anag.) 4. ARTIST (hidden) 5. V-A-MOOSE 6. EP(I-SOD)IC 7. GA(L)LE-ON 8. SLO(WWI)TTED 9. T(I)ARA 10. ENT-ANGLE (ten anag.) 16. DEVA-STATES 17. I-RENE 18. UNDIES (pun) 20. O-AS-IS 21. LIBELANT (anag.) 22. OVERST)-EP 23. EASEMENT (tease men with t shifted) 25. CHE(E)RIO (anag. + e) 27. TAB-LETS 28. UTTERL-Y (anag. + y) 30. S(A-FAR)I 32. YO-BB-O 34. ESSE-N

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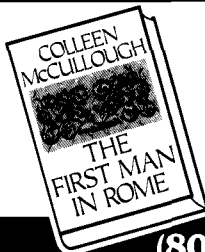
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ror paralyzes her and she is purely unable to take a step.

The judge calls, "Shed" or "That'll do," and that's that.

I'VE GOT TWO trial dogs, Pip, age nine, and Gael, a three-year-old I bought in Ayrshire, Scotland, the previous June. This is Gael's first year at the trials, and I hoped to show her off, but so far we've not done well. She is the best dog I've ever had, a light dog with brilliant balance. We were beaten by difficult sheep at the Blue Ridge trial, and at Seclusival I miscommanded Gael not once but twice, and when she came off the course she was confused and upset and disappointed in me.

A couple of the dog handlers are under twenty-five, several are well over seventy; the youngest dog here is two, the oldest ten and a half. A haze blurs the course.

Gael is relaxed, determined, when we walk onto the course. When I send her, I put my whistle to my lips, in case she stops short, but she comes around perfectly, like a lesson in how to do it, and my heart jumps and sweat pops out on my forehead. When I whistle her up, the sheep come down the course as if they were on a Sunday stroll. Gael corrects them onto the fetch line without a wobble. They are wild as they approach me, jolty, wide-eyed, on tiptoe, but Gael aims them around and straight for the drive gates. Bingo! On the far side of the gates the sheep disappear behind the bushes and I can't see Gael at all. I tell her to "Get up." My mouth is dry as hope. The sheep come into sight, right in line. I misjudge the cross-drive gates (damn!), and the sheep miss the opening, but they march nicely toward me as I run to the pen. Skittish as these ewes are, we'll get one chance. If they learn how to beat us at the pen, they'll be gone. Gael brings them up slowly, very slowly, dead in line, just to the corner I want, fifteen, fourteen, thirteen, twelve feet away, and I ease the gate open. My timer buzzes: ninety seconds left. Ten feet away, standing in the pen mouth, the sheep bunch tight, heads swiveling looking for flight, and Gael lies down.

I read this as weakness. "Get up, Gael! Get up, lass," and the instant she gets to her feet, the sheep fly.

The sheep having learned that they

can circle the pen, nothing Gael or I do prevents them from doing just that. The timekeeper's "Time, sir" comes as a relief. Back under the awning Gael drinks water and I drink iced tea.

Twenty eminent border collies will qualify for the Oatlands finals the next day, Sunday. The cutoff score is 63.5. Gael has 61.5.

Let's have an instant replay of what happened out there, when I ordered Gael to get up and the sheep bolted.

This was Gael's fifth trial in a week, and she knew perfectly well what was expected of her. She prefers skittish sheep and has a knack for settling them. Thus, from the get-go, she knew she was beautiful. She could tell from my voice, the soft commands, that I liked what she was doing. Perhaps her tattered confidence was surging in her wee breast. On she came, on to the drive and away again. She would have seen the cross-drive gates more clearly than I did, but probably didn't care very much that the sheep missed them. Then, slowly, slowly, she brought them to the corner of the pen.

The sheep—fresh ones for each dog—had never seen anything like this pen gizmo before. They stopped, looking left, looking right, praying for escape. They were trembling, quite at the end of their tether.

When Gael lay down, she took pressure off them, calmed things down, gave the sheep a space to breathe.

Last weekend, at the Blue Ridge trial, Gael couldn't move stubborn sheep around the course. So now, when she lay down, I read her move as weakness.

She was saying, "Take it easy, boss. When they're calmer, we'll go on." I was saying, "I don't trust you. You're too weak." When she took my command "Get up," against her better judgment, she was saying, "I'll take your word for it." And, of course, the sheep blew up.

Dangerous competitors don't make this sort of mistake. The rapport of an eminent dog and a dangerous man is deeply private and factual. Each mind is less without the other.

Although I can imagine my life changing so that I couldn't live on a farm and couldn't keep working sheep-dogs, I wouldn't want a dog that did no work at all. If I had to choose between a pet dog and no dog, I'd choose no dog. A pet dog can never be *right*. □

Books

Inexplicable Dinosaurs

by Anthony Burgess

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE
BRITISH ARISTOCRACY
by David Cannadine.
Yale University Press, \$35.00.

AMERICANS, BEING good republicans and democrats, should either have no interest in Professor Cannadine's subject or else take a grim pleasure in his record of the decay of privilege. Yet there remains a certain nostalgia, at least for titles, else why call Ellington Duke and Hines Earl? In Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt* the eponym is proud of taking a decayed baronet to a Chicago cinema. The Zenith gossip columnist fulsomely celebrates the baronet's visit to the land of the free, though nobody seems sure whether he is Sir Gerald Doak or Lord Doak.

American ignorance of the ladder of nobility has, in my experience, to be put right at the outset of university courses on Shakespeare. Why does that ladder exist and when did it start? "When Adam delved and Eve span / Who was then a gentleman?" was a medieval leveling slogan. Resentment goes back a long way, yet the aristocracy survived and still, in a manner, survives. A decline and fall does not signify a liquidation.

In the interests of trans-Atlantic lucidity, allow me to throw light on the strata of our aristocracy. "Knight"

and "earl" are Anglo-Saxon designations (*cniht* and *eorl*). The other ranks, in ascending order—baronet, baron, viscount, marquis, duke—come, as the Latinate names indicate, from the Norman settlement. William the Conqueror rewarded his followers with English land, which meant title. With Henry VIII's abolition of the monasteries, monastic acres became secular property, with titles to go with it. A title meant nothing without land. There is a species of landowner without title, a member of the landed gentry, who is always a gentleman, entitled to bear arms. William Shakespeare achieved that rank, which was no small thing. The honorific "Sir" was neither here nor there: you were entitled to it if you had a university degree. But "Sir" is nowadays for a knight or a baronet. The baronet passes it on, the knight not. Baronets are no longer being created; the peerage itself (baron upward) has become an uninheritable award for newly created peers, though Denis Thatcher, no doubt for his uncommon services to the realm, is a notable re-

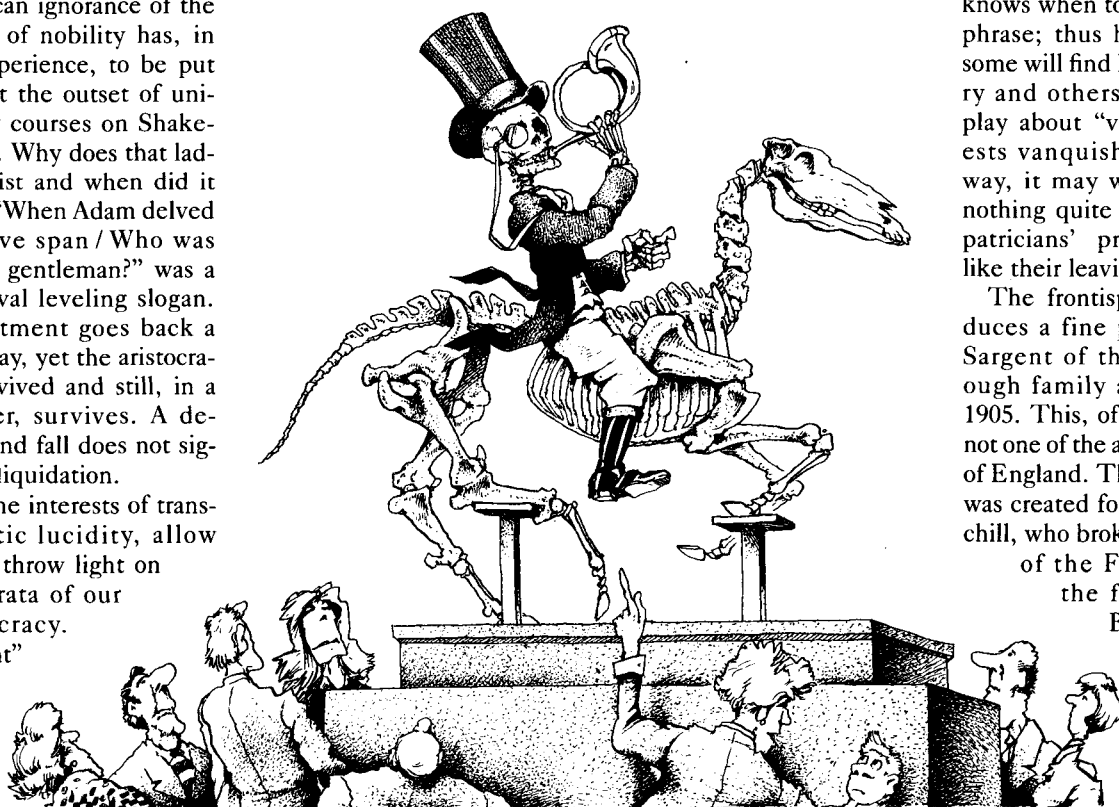
cent exception. Land no longer applies.

Professor Cannadine is not concerned with origins, only with that diminution of the value of property which signaled the decay of the great families. Cannadine is a professor of history at Columbia University, though a Briton by birth. His book is "about a large number of people with various things in common: the grandes and gentry of the British Isles during the century from the 1880s to our own time." For these people 1894 was the critical year. It saw a dramatic crash in the wheat market, a blow from which many families, heavily invested in wheat, never recovered. It also saw the first levying of "death duties," or inheritance taxes, on the great landed estates: beginning at eight percent, they would climb to 40 percent by 1919 and to a confiscatory 60 percent by 1939.

Altogether, this is an immense work of learning, whose focus on such objectivities as land and money does not impede the flow of anecdote, or dim the author's powers as a social psychologist. He writes a brisk prose, and

knows when to turn an old phrase; thus he says that some will find his a sad story and others a morality play about "vested interests vanquished. Either way, it may well be that nothing quite became the patricians' pre-eminence like their leaving of it."

The frontispiece reproduces a fine painting by Sargent of the Marlborough family as it was in 1905. This, of course, was not one of the ancient tribes of England. The dukedom was created for Jack Churchill, who broke the power of the French, and the family seat, Blenheim, was named



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The U.N. and the Middle East

Is it a proper forum to sit in judgment

From following what's happening in the United Nations it's easy to come to the conclusion that Israel is the source of most of the problems in the world. And that, if Israel were only less "intransigent" and if it would yield the administered territories of the "West Bank" and Gaza, peace would descend on the Middle East.

What are the facts?

■ The United Nations seems obsessed with Israel. The level of U.N. preoccupation with Israel is totally out of proportion with events in that country. In the course of the last ten years, the General Assembly has entertained 175 hostile resolutions dealing with Israel and the "Palestinian problem". During that entire year it did not once criticize any of the Arab countries. Every year, the General Assembly goes through the charade of considering the expulsion of Israel from the United Nations. In 1985, the General Assembly of the U.N. covered itself with everlasting shame by declaring that Zionism is racism. The Security Council has proposed numerous anti-Israel resolutions during the last three years. All of them would have passed unanimously or with lopsided majorities had it not been for vetoes of most of them by the United States.

■ Recently, the attention of the United Nations was particularly engaged by two incidents in Israel, namely the killing of seven Arab laborers by a demented Israeli solitary gunman, and by the death of 17 Arab on the Jerusalem Temple Mount. In that incident, a mob of 4,000 Arabs, thrown into a frenzy by their clerics, loosed fusillades of rocks and other missiles on Jewish worshippers gathered for prayers by the Western Wall. In both cases, the Security Council dropped all other business, promulgated anti-Israel resolutions and requested that teams of "observers" be sent to Israel, presumably to report on the alleged abuses perpetrated on the "Palestinians" by that country and by its government. One wonders why, regardless of the merits of the anti-Israel accusations, any "observers" at all would be required. Israel, and the territories administered by it, are not some remote region in some outlying area of a dark empire. There are more journalists, photographers, television crews, reporters, parliamentary delegations, professional groups, fact finding mis-

sions, and human rights activists there than in any other spot on the globe. Never in modern history has there been a spot so microscopically and so meticulously inspected as the small country of Israel. One questions why a delegation of U.N. observers would be required and what mischievous purposes their observations could possibly serve.

■ The obsession of the United Nations with Israel and its alleged violations is the more remarkable considering that organizations' total disregard of the unspeakable barbarities of so many other nations in the Middle East. For instance, the Security Council meeting that resolved to send a delegation to Israel to investigate "abuses" was inspired by the PLO, whose numberless outrages -- including the killing of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics, the bombing of tourist buses, old-age homes, synagogues, airports, airliners, and so much more -- have never received the slightest attention by the U.N. Nor have the unspeakable human rights abuses and sickening crimes by the Arab states ever been discussed in that body. These crimes, instigated and supported by Arab governments, include the slaughter in 1982 of over 20,000 Syrian citizens in Hama, at the command of Hafez Assad, that country's president (and our most recent ally!); the poison-gassing of over 5,000 Iraqi Kurdish citizens by Saddam Hussein; over 100,000 Lebanese civilians killed by PLO gunmen, and other militias and terrorist groups; Egyptian troops cold-bloodedly killing over 100 rioting police in 1986; the Algerian police indiscriminately machine-gunning hundreds of its own citizens in a few days of rioting; the Libyans assassinating untold numbers of their opponents inside the country and outside; hundreds of Iranian pilgrims ruthlessly being gunned down by the Saudis during the pilgrimage to Mecca; the hundreds of thousands being killed in the Sudan in inter-racial massacres. Lebanon's rape by Syria, and so much more. The United Nations did not concern itself with any of these.

Among the hypocritical accusers of Israel in the U.N. Security Council are the French and the Soviets, merchants of death who have supplied Iraq with the weaponry, the materials and the technology to produce chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. Without them, the present situation would not have arisen. These same cynics bitterly denounced Israel for destroying the Iraqi nuclear capability in 1981. Had Israel not done that, Iran would now in all likelihood be an atomic wasteland and no U.S. or U.N. presence in the area would now be possible. And such stalwarts democrats and practitioners of human rights as Yemen, Cuba, Zaire, and Malaysia also sit on the Security Council and cynically condemn Israel, the only people in the entire Middle East that have a freely elected government and that contributed to the Western legacy the very concepts of justice and of human rights. Is the U.N. a proper forum to sit in judgment about Israel and about the events in the middle East? The evidence is clear and the answer is obvious.

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for a decisive victory. The title meant nothing without broad acres, but in 1905 their value was in decline and the duke had to marry an American heiress. It is she, Consuelo Vanderbilt, who dominates the picture. Land lost value because British agriculture could no longer compete with imported foodstuffs. If there was coal underneath it, that altered the situation dramatically. If, as with the Duke of Westminster's estate, the land was metropolitan realty, then wealth became fabulous.

WHAT EXACTLY was the national utility of these magnates? They governed vast estates and, logically, saw themselves as governors of the nation. The House of Lords, however elected governments try to pack it with specially created political titles, primarily exhibits the power of primogeniture, though it is a power increasingly nominal. There has always been talk of the value of an elected senate, but the lords go on, incisive or drawling patrician voices on radio and television, tempered by the demotic of the newer creations. The aristocracy ran society from their town houses and their country estates. The dowagers arranged dynastic marriages. The embassies were run by lords and so was the army, the navy less, the air force not at all. But the aristocracy's power has always been commensurate with its landed wealth. When the aristocrats had to compete in the professions, their amateurism, which expensive educations had done nothing to modify, was all too evident.

They usually did well in the army. In the First World War they died for a country they loved, since they owned it. In the Second World War the management of the nation was in the hands of the aristocrat Churchill, an elder son of a *younger* son who nevertheless felt Blenheim was home, not rich but reliant on politics and journalism for a living, a maverick who mistakenly believed that the common people loved him. The late A.J.P. Taylor said, "The British ruling classes did their best to keep him down, and he preserved them." The aristocracy was well represented among the military commanders, chiefly out of the old Anglo-Irish ascendancy. Foxes as well as Germans had to be pursued. The tally-ho horn competed with the reveille bugle. Lord Leconfield, on horseback in Sus-

sex, came across a crowd watching a soccer match. "Haven't you people got anything better to do in wartime than play football?" he bellowed. Then he resumed his chase of the fox.

Churchill took noble rank for granted as a badge of territorial authority. It had been different with David Lloyd George, who, Taylor said, "detested titles. This, no doubt, is why he distributed them so lavishly." Lloyd George sold honors, amassing more than £2 million for his personal political fund—£10,000 for a knighthood, £30,000 for a baronetcy, £50,000 and up for a peerage. The new pseudo-aristocracy was strictly a plutocracy. The press magnates Rothermere and Beaverbrook equated authority not with land but with the power to bamboozle the public. In our own age, life baronies go to provision grandees like Lord Forte and entertainment merchants like Lord Grade.

WHY SHOULD Americans, having established a society with no hereditary privileges, set such store by titles that magazines flourish by alternating lavish coverage of American celebrities with equally compelling inquiries into the fascinating doings of the royals? Probably because all that Americans can achieve is great wealth, and wealth is never enough. One needs mystique as well, and mystique in America is reserved to the entertainment industry. When honors were so freely for sale in England, the plutocrat William Waldorf Astor began to buy. He had a fortune of \$100 million, and by the careful deployment of some fractions of this he became, after naturalization, a baron in 1916 and a viscount the year after. He established a dynasty but also prepared the way for the Anglophile trans-Atlantic snobs—Elsa Maxwell, Laura Corrigan, Emerald Cunard, Henry Channon—who imposed a new glitter and perhaps vulgarity on upper-class English life. "Chips" Channon became MP for Southend but lamented, "In society I am a power, . . . at the House of Commons I am a nonentity." The rift between political power and mere wealth had begun. Dim as most of them were, the landed aristocracy were impelled to a sense of responsibility and given a chance to exercise it.

Dim, yes. They had great possessions and did not appreciate them. A passion for art began to appear only

when sales were imposed by enormous death duties and they whimpered about being the custodians of national treasures. The magnificent houses, monuments of architectural genius set in parks created by Capability Brown, faced dispossession through lack of funds. Who could afford the staff? Dukes and duchesses now do their own cooking in the former servants' quarters. "The Stately Homes of England, how beautiful they stand," Noel Coward sang, "To prove the upper classes have still the upper hand," but, like so much in England, they are either derelict or carefully refurbished museum pieces.

PROFESSOR CANNADINE has telling epigraphs to every section of this exhaustive and exhausting book. His overall epigraph comes from a poem by Keith Douglas:

How can I live among this gentle
obsolescent breed of heroes and not
weep?

Unicorns, almost,
for they are fading into two legends
in which their stupidity and chivalry
are celebrated. Each, fool and hero,
will be an immortal.

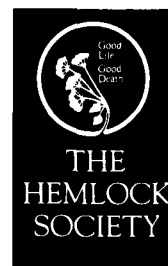
This, Professor Cannadine writes,

was occasioned by the death, on active service, of Lt. Col. J. D. Player, who left £3,000 to the Beaufort Hunt, and also directed that the incumbent of the living in his gift should be "a man who approves of hunting, shooting, and all manly sports, which are the backbone of the nation."

There was doubtless something heroic about this breed of landed magnate, and the component of chivalric stupidity has needed to be celebrated in our lighter literature. The comic magnificence of certain noblemen in P. G. Wodehouse and Evelyn Waugh is curiously capable of modulating into magnificent seriousness: Lord and Lady Marchmain, in *Brideshead Revisited*, to say nothing of Lord Sebastian and Lady Julia, are genuine myths. Of course, they are Catholic, which may make a difference. In a hundred years readers will meet our nobility as inexplicable dinosaurs. And what will the British monarchy do without that aristocratic cushion between itself and the common sort? Britain as a republic will be almost as dull as America. □

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The Other Kennan

by James H. Billington

GEORGE KENNAN
AND THE AMERICAN-RUSSIAN
RELATIONSHIP, 1865-1924
by Frederick F. Travis.
Ohio University Press, \$39.95.

WE THINK OF them as relatively new situations: Russia shaken from autocratic isolation by new forms of communication; the spread of concern for human rights and constitutional rule from West to East; America's efforts to maintain good relations with autocratic rulers while helping democratic protesters. Yet these are precisely the issues that defined the career of the first American Russia expert, George Kennan, a century ago. More than any other single American, this first cousin twice removed of our own era's George F. Kennan "discovered" and described Russia for America during the more than half a century between the American and Russian civil wars.

Kennan was a child of the new communications revolution, first visiting Siberia as part of an ill-fated telegraphic expedition, then making Russia the subject of one of the great lecturing careers of the late nineteenth century and one of the great journalistic careers of the early twentieth. Having discovered Siberia as an adventuresome frontiersman trying to forge a European-American cable connection the long way, across the Bering Strait, Kennan

returned to expose the czarist prisons of Siberia and to become perhaps the leading champion in the Western world of democratic revolutionary resistance to the czarist authorities. As such, he struggled against a well-established official American policy of friendship for that particular autocracy. He mobilized American popular opinion in behalf of Russia's suppressed political opposition, and eventually helped change U.S. government policy as well.

IT IS A GREAT strength of this extensively researched new biography by Frederick Travis that we discover how little Kennan really studied Russia, how many mistakes (including deliberate ones) he introduced into his journalism, and yet how little challenged his authority remained within the United States. This was an age when America was absorbed in its own interests and inclined to read foreign countries, if at all, in terms of its own institutions and aspirations. Until the early twentieth century the study of Russia was almost totally absent from universities, and serious literature on Russia almost totally absent from libraries. Dilettantism could triumph if accompanied by the kind of arrogant tenacity and rhetorical panache that Kennan possessed. He presented a picture of Russia that was more a projection of characteristic American hopes, fears, and fantasies in an era of exuberant self-confidence than the product of hard-earned knowledge.

His authority was, however, based on firsthand observations, though they were largely focused on the exotic. Kennan first arrived in Russia in 1865, and only after spending two winters in hitherto largely unknown parts of Sibe-

ria (later described in his first major book, *Tent Life in Siberia*) did Kennan visit Moscow and St. Petersburg. On his second trip he passed rapidly through Petersburg in order to reach the Caucasus, describing himself as "a vagabond . . . who travels without any definite utilitarian aim . . . the vagabond is never a specialist . . . he is ready to become all things with all men and to make himself equally at home in all places." His early travels in Russia were thus a kind of romantic *Wanderjahre* for a young midwestern Calvinist who was losing both his boyhood religious faith and his adolescent enthusiasm for scientific and technical expeditions. But he developed what grew into a lifelong fascination with the Russian people. There was, initially, no political or social content to his interest, although he generally shared the vague Russophilia in some circles that followed Russian support for the Union in the Civil War and the sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867. Throughout the 1870s and early 1880s Kennan defended Russian policy even when it proved expansionist, first in the Balkans and then in Central Asia, and he also tried to propagate the glories of Russian literature.

His ten-month-long trip to Siberia in 1885 and 1886 turned him from a defender of official Russia into a self-appointed spokesman for the political exiles and prisoners that he discovered there. Romantic infatuation was part of it all, as Kennan himself acknowledged: "With many of them I simply fall dead in love as if I were a girl of eighteen." But he was also moved by the moral purity of the exiles—their continued intellectual earnestness under difficult conditions and their com-

bination of inner dignity and outward affection for this mysterious visitor from distant America. Kennan was particularly impressed by Catherine Breshkovsky, the populist "little grandmother of the Russian Revolution." She bade him farewell in the small Transbaikal village to which she was confined by saying, "We may die in exile, and our grand children may die in exile, but something will come of it at last." One of the Russians explained that until they had met Kennan, "we had been talking either to acknowledged friends or to prejudiced enemies, but never to an impartial observer, who would take on himself to bring the case before the tribunal of universal conscience." Kennan devoted much of the next twenty years to pressing their cause, mainly from the lecture platform.

He lectured before about a million people in the course of the 1890s, inspiring in one of them a "curious craving to see this gaunt land of Siberia and let my own eyes gaze on the starved wretches sent to a living death." Victorians loved to feel both superior to and shocked by distant outrages like those Kennan recounted. A taunt thrown at Victorian liberals—they "cross equinoctial lines in search of objects of charity"—brings to mind the "radical chic" of more recent times: North Americans incensed by events in Southeast Asia, South America, or South Africa.

Travis astutely observes that Kennan "saw in the political exiles the same heroic spirit that had attracted him to Caucasian mountaineers, wandering Koriaks in northeastern Siberia, and reforming drunkards on New York's Water Street." It was something like the spirit that another great journalist, John Reed, later sought first in the Wobblies, then in Mexican revolutionaries, and finally in the Bolsheviks about whom he fantasized so appealingly in *Ten Days That Shook the World*.

BUT KENNAN'S infatuation with Russia was informed by a sterner moral purpose, which Travis describes as a sense that Kennan was always on the side of civilization against barbarism. His long campaign in behalf of political prisoners was expanded to include persecuted minorities in the Russian empire—particularly the Jews—and the Japanese, who warred with the Russians in 1904-1905. He

helped in a fascinating, little-known campaign to educate and politically mobilize Russian prisoners of war in Japan. And he attached great hopes to the Russian Revolution of 1905 and even greater to the democratic revolution of February, 1917.

Kennan was a perceptive analyst of the practical need for democratic and constitutional reform. He was particularly distressed by the czarist repression of student activity after the upheavals of 1905. "A university is a barometer which shows the state of the public mind," Kennan quoted a Russian surgeon as saying. "A wise man does not break the instrument, but learns from it what the weather is likely to be." He accused the czars of breaking the barometers rather than read them. He saw that all Russian involvement in modern wars concluded with a period of reform or revolution—in effect, "a recompense for their sacrifices and losses."

All the more bitter, then, was the Bolshevik betrayal of a revolution that Kennan had encouraged in its democratic phase. Unlike John Reed, Kennan vehemently rejected the October Revolution, both because of the Bolsheviks' renunciation of the Allied cause in the war and because the Soviet government lacked the "knowledge, experience, or education to deal successfully with the tremendous problems that have come up for solutions since the overthrow of the Tsar." Kennan criticized Woodrow Wilson for being much too timid in intervening against Bolshevik power, and persisted longer than most Americans in the belief that the Siberians would hold out against the Bolsheviks, because they were a "bolder and more independent people than the Muzhiks of European Russia." Travis tends to be rather condemnatory both of Kennan's extreme opposition to the Bolshevik takeover and of his insistence on the moral obligation to defend the provisional government. Kennan's last epitaph on the Bolshevik Revolution was written in a small-town newspaper, the *Medina Tribune*, in July of 1923:

The Russian leopard has not changed its spots. . . . The new Bolshevik constitution . . . leaves all power just where it has been for the last five years—in the hands of a small group of self-appointed bureaucrats which the people can neither remove nor control.

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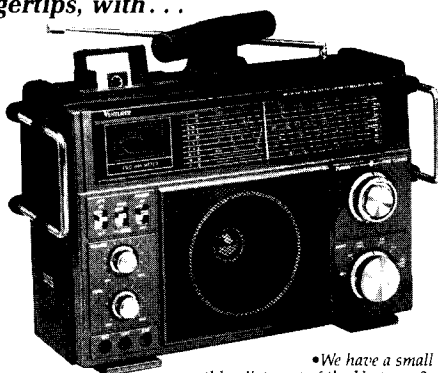
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He died not long after Lenin did, having just finished an article on Japanese education—finding more hope for the future in Japan than in Russia.

ONE IS RELIEVED that Travis's biography does not include the kind of psychological probing or moralistic preaching that has too often been directed at Victorian figures, though his tendency to make this account an exhaustive inventory of Kennan's acquaintances and views results in a certain blandness. Kennan's larger-than-life and even heroic qualities—his physical endurance on Siberian trips and on lecture tours, the majesty of his moralism—never quite come across. But Travis perceptively identifies Kennan's flaws. There was more than a little blindness in the man. He was sympathetic chiefly to political prisoners, who represented a minute fraction of those in Russia's vast penal and exile system. As far as we know, he never visited any prison outside Russia for comparative purposes. He confused political exiles in East Siberia with administrative exiles in West Siberia, and at times he misled his audiences in other ways to dramatize his cause. Kennan never probed deeply into the views of Russians working within the system, whom he could have helped and learned from. Nikolai Yadrintsev, for instance, one of the most interesting and sophisticated publicists in behalf of a semi-independent Siberia, urged a different, more open style of development there. Kennan met him early but seems never to have talked seriously with him or with a number of others who saw then—as many do today—that Siberia itself might ultimately become an example of the kind of liberal democratic development that its prisoners advocated.

The fact remains, however, that Kennan created American public interest in the internal conditions of a remote country, and the story of how he did so supplies an impressive first chapter for a history, yet to be written, on the effects of American journalism on foreign policy. Kennan catalyzed a range of things that eventually helped to change policy: the first English-language opposition journal, *Free Russia*; the Society of American Friends of Russian Freedom (involving such luminaries as Julia Ward Howe and Mark Twain); and a public campaign against

a Senate-approved treaty that would have exposed Jewish émigrés to America to possible arrest if they re-entered Russia. State Department officials in the late nineteenth century were as annoyed by Kennan's attempts to affect intergovernmental relations as their successors were many years later by the outcries over immigration and human rights which led to the Jackson-Vanik amendment of 1974. It is easy to forget now, in the wake of the victory of the human-rights agenda in Eastern Europe, how doggedly most of the American foreign-policy establishment resisted the intrusion of such concerns into its realpolitik agenda of security, political, and economic questions. It was Western Europeans, rather than Americans, who took the lead in assuring that human rights were included in "basket three," which became part of the international obligations of all signatories of the Helsinki Final Act. Leaders in the newly emerging democracies of Eastern Europe today express more admiration for moralistic journalists than for realistic diplomats. They are likely, too, to feel greater sympathy for Kennan's buccaneering spirit and his fierce denunciation of autocracy and Bolshevism than for the more cautious and moderate positions taken both by his opponents then and by his biographer now. □

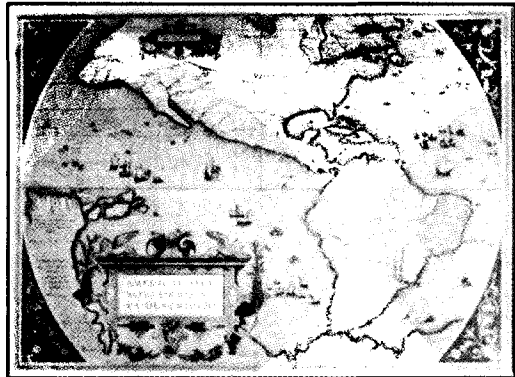
Brief Reviews



THE SEARCH FOR THE PINK-HEADED DUCK by Rory Nugent. Houghton Mifflin, \$19.95. The gaudy duck in question is, or was (it has not been sighted since 1935), a native of India. Mr. Nugent went looking for it on the chance that the bird still holds out in remote northern areas. He began, however, in Calcutta, where he was offered dyed and painted ducks and even a painted pigeon. The pigeon was too much. He headed for New Delhi and settled in for a long battle with official red tape,

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**ILLIBERAL
EDUCATION**
by Dinesh D'Souza

The heavily publicized racial confrontations on several college campuses in recent years are mere symptoms of deeper changes—changes in the intellectual and moral infrastructure of the American university. These changes involve not merely race relations or social relations of other kinds but the very substance of the curriculum, the nature of learning, and the meaning of knowledge. “Instead of liberal education,” the author writes, “what American students are getting today is its diametrical opposite, an education in closed-mindedness and intolerance.”



**THE DEATH OF
BROADWAY**
by Thomas M. Disch

During the next decade, the author writes, the Great White Way will in all likelihood become “a graveyard for great white elephants,” as, one by one, the thirty-six theaters left in the Broadway area find themselves unable to bring in either shows or audiences.

for the places he wished to visit are largely under military control. Once out of that tangle, he dodged—not always legally—along the frontier and ended by paddling the Brahmaputra from Burma to Bangladesh. He and his Indian companion were told horror stories of dacoits, pirates, and crocodiles, but what they encountered were rapids, whirlpools, sandbars, and villagers who had never before seen a European but considered the appearance of one a fine excuse for a party. Duck or no duck, Mr. Nugent found many lively, talkative, witty people, including refugee lamas from Tibet and Gurkhas agitating for independence. He evidently had a grand, if sometimes risky, journey, and gives the reader all the fun and suspense without the danger.

HAROUN AND THE SEA OF STORIES by Salman Rushdie. Viking, \$18.95. Mr. Rushdie has responded to censorship by death threat with a fantasy—a merry romp in defense of imagination, free speech, and the art of fiction. The tale is ostensibly for juveniles, but social implications and satirical wordplay make it delightful entertainment for readers of any age.

WHITE PEOPLE by Allan Gurganus. Knopf, \$21.95. Mr. Gurganus's short stories describe the doings of unremarkable, mostly upper-middle-class people in North Carolina. There are family tensions and disappointments, one absurdly disrupted bridge party, a couple of homosexual adventures, all presented with quiet conviction and a nice appreciation of how decent citizens get on with life and each other. The author has an exceptional ability to make the ordinary interesting.

SMALL FIRES selected and edited by Christopher Cerf and Marina Albee. Summit, \$22.95/\$12.95. The editors of the Russian magazine *Ogonyok* took quick advantage of *glasnost* by instituting a “letters to the editors” column in which citizens could actually lay out complaints against the Soviet authorities and system. The selection of letters (not all of them previously published) presented here gives a sharp picture of the concerns and problems of Soviet citizens. Shortages, insolent petty bureaucrats, idiotic regulations, corruption, and misinformation are major tar-

gets. “There is no doubt,” one correspondent observes, “that when it comes to manual typewriters we are ‘ahead’ of the whole world . . . as long as you take into account that industrially developed countries have stopped making them.” A crippled widow of eighty-two complains that she cannot have her adopted son, whose help she needs, share her apartment, although she can will it to him, but “in order to will him the apartment now, I either have to leave it myself or marry my adopted son. Only our housing laws could create a situation as ridiculous as this!” It is the unnecessary and ridiculous aspect of Soviet arrangements that time and again causes a Western reader to marvel or to chuckle. The letters about facts of Soviet history, which many of the writers are evidently learning for the first time, are quite different. They range from sad to horrifying.

THE SECRET PILGRIM by John le Carré. Knopf, \$21.95. With the Cold War seemingly over, what is an author of espionage novels to do? Mr. le Carré has already found the answer: let retired agents reminisce. In his latest book one of Smiley's underlings recalls highlights of his career in what amounts to a series of short stories held together by the narrator's rueful acknowledgment that much of what he did was either ineffective or mistaken. The ironic undertone gives an intellectual edge to even the simplest of the tales, and the best of them has real poignancy.

PINOCCHIO IN VENICE by Robert Coover. Simon & Schuster/Linden, \$19.95. Pinocchio in Mr. Coover's novel has become an elderly professor of aesthetics and philosophy (his concept of the bridge between It-ness and I-ness has revolutionized thinking in his field), winner of two Nobel prizes and recipient of enough honors for an entire faculty. He returns to Venice, hoping that the scenes of his youth will inspire him to compose an adequate ending to the book he is writing, which is a tribute to the fairy with the blue hair, his mentor and lifelong inspiration. He encounters old friends in Venice, and even more old enemies; he blunders through nightmarish disasters; he is robbed, abused, and humiliated; and he gradually reverts to his original condition as a wooden puppet. He is also tormented by manifestations of the

blue-haired fairy. All this fantasy is related to prose heavily festooned with arcane references that may or may not be genuine, with arboreal puns, with imitations of academic pomposity, and with devices borrowed from Rabelais. There is, it seems, no end to Mr. Coover's verbal ingenuity, and all those words give his work more surface than content. That content turns out to be yet another lament for the human condition—the game that we all lose in the end.

THE WAKE OF THE UNSEEN OBJECT by Tom Kizzia. Holt, \$19.95. Mr. Kizzia, writing for *The Anchorage Daily News*, roamed the Alaskan bush reporting on "native cultures." Sometimes this meant "walking around a village knocking on doors and asking for old stories" that nobody remembered, but when he was lucky, Mr. Kizzia found traditions concerning religious beliefs or hunting territories, or information on tribal disagreements over dealings with the U.S. government, or tall tales of dog teams and game wardens. He

also found, to his and the reader's amazement, a Lapp-trained Apache trying to teach proper reindeer management to indifferent Alaskans. There is a great deal of unusual information in Mr. Kizzia's book, briskly and unpretentiously presented. There is also an implied warning: travel in the Alaskan bush is a hard and chancy business.

SOUTH AFRICA by Mangosuthu G. Buthelezi. St. Martin's, \$24.95. Perhaps in response to the international attention recently given Nelson Mandela, Mr. Buthelezi, the leader of the Inkatha Party, offers his own "Vision of the Future." What he envisions is a multi-racial, capitalist, multiparty democracy, providing "a government which governs by consensus and in such a way that all the people of this country accept the way in which they are governed." He is well aware that this ideal will not be achieved easily or quickly, and that progress "depends upon Mr. de Klerk having the guts to go further than he ever thought he would have to go, and black politics having the guts

to encourage him when he does go in the right direction." Nothing in the text explains why some black South Africans are killing other black South Africans when, according to Mr. Buthelezi, they should all join forces to bring an end to apartheid.

MOSCOW AND BEYOND by Andrei Sakharov. Knopf, \$19.95. A pendant to Sakharov's fine autobiography, this book covers the years 1986–1989, during which the author, restored to freedom and honor, busied himself with campaigns for civil rights and governmental reforms in his country. Much of the text involves the labyrinthine complexities of the Soviet political system and may well bewilder all but specialists in that area, but episodes like Sakharov's visits to Armenia and Azerbaijan are grimly clear in their depiction of local hatreds and official stupidities, while his comments on the operations of certain well-intentioned international organizations are tartly comic.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

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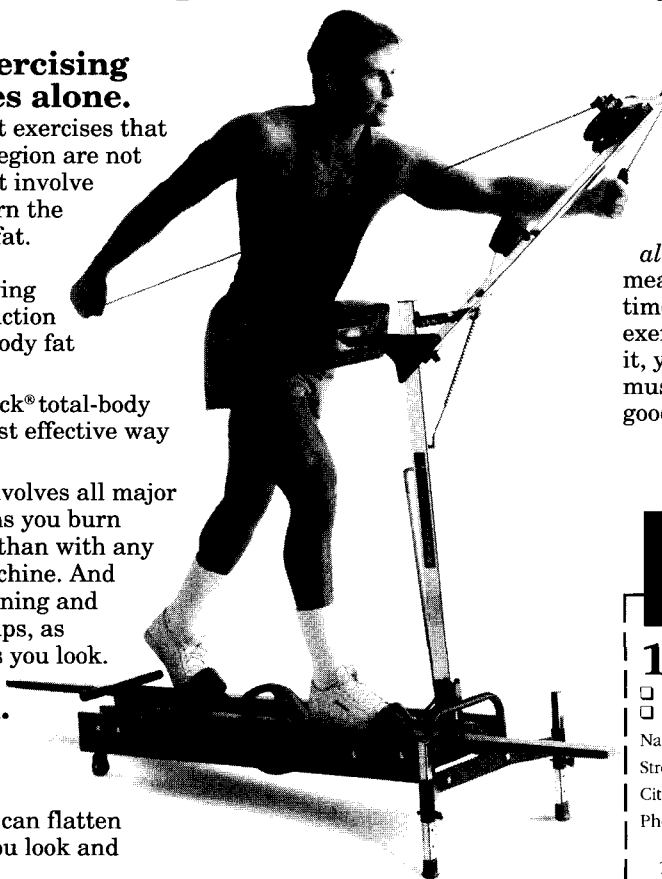
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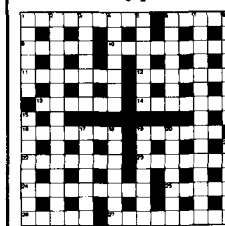
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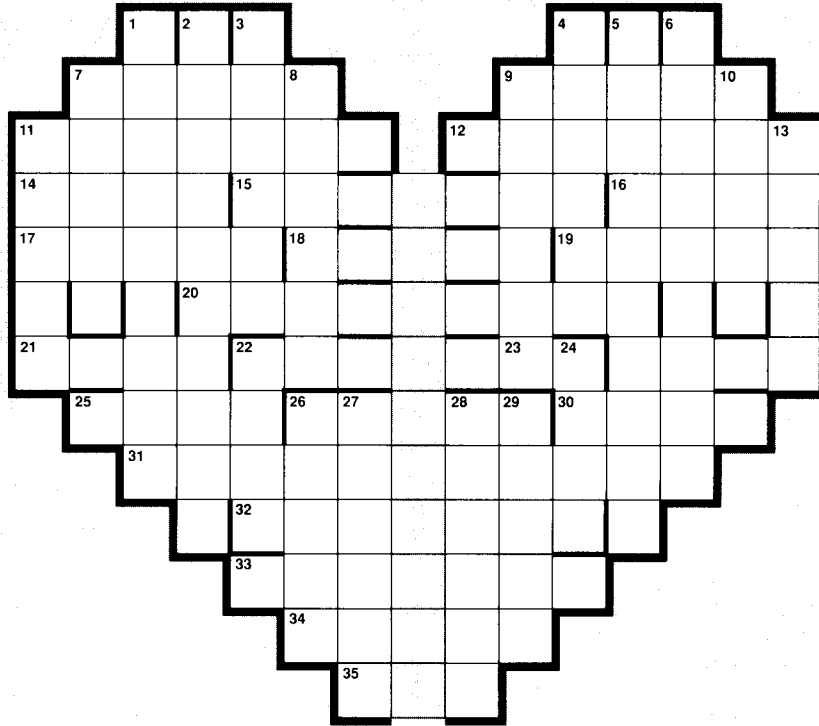
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THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

HEARTBROKEN

Answers to this puzzle are to be entered normally. Each Across entry that spans the central fracture skips over an empty square, leaving an unfilled space in the heart of the word. But a new word can be formed if solvers enter the proper central letter; and the 10 letters thus entered, reading from top to bottom, provide the answer to this riddle: "What can you use to mend a broken heart?" Clue answers include nine proper words (one an abbreviation). New Across words formed by adding central letters include one proper noun.



The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 83.

ACROSS

- 7. Firm declined to keep operator (5)
- 9. Sing mostly about one Alpine region (5)
- 11. Trinket I let Bob rent (7)
- 12. Pink rings covering diadem (7)
- 14. Western city restricted a person from the east (4)
- 15. King of France, in backing top Beethoven symphony (6)
- 16. Five-nothing; the heartless decision (4)
- 17. Reagan, after seizing Guam's capital (5)
- 18. It's a pity a girl has to be heard (4)
- 19. Before covering, almost catch cold (5)
- 20. Dee is feeding an idiot dim sum (8)
- 21. Handles decapitated fish (4)
- 22. Grabbed by glutton, diarist is getting edgy? (6)
- 24. Start off hazy and chill (4)
- 25. Series' second assist following gamble (4)
- 26. Name for a dog the man put in Spanish (4)
- 30. Blame attached to our people (4)
- 31. Swinger's activity Canseco did badly (10) (*two words*)
- 32. Studying course in Italy with gang (6)
- 33. Ran after the leader got weak (6)
- 34. Volumes lacking 1,000 digits (4)
- 35. State of Andy's heart (2)
- 4. Sign about a shrew (6)
- 5. Origin of hot spot in spring (10)
- 6. Pout about refusal to record speech (9)
- 7. Oddly, sniper goes for military blockade (5)
- 8. Fish-catcher brought up trouble with dolphin (6)
- 9. Said poison is an alarming thing (6)
- 10. Romance in note after note after note (5)
- 11. Couple of second-rate people (5)
- 13. Shelf's long border (5)
- 22. Bears quietly getting closer (4)
- 23. Heartlessly operating bell (4)
- 26. "Run DMC" ultimately gets into smut (5)
- 27. Fictional elephant's height or weight (6)
- 28. Edward repeatedly has it changed (6)
- 29. Pronounced aches in sides (5)

DOWN

- 1. Bad hole in new sort of boot? (9)
- 2. Synthetic stuff keeps years and years and years (that's redundant) (10)
- 3. Part of Palestine's military initiative (6)

NOTE: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

WORD WATCH

BY ANNE H. SOUKHANOV

domo *noun*, a professional person, typically aged 30–39, who markedly retrenches in his or her career in order to perform more-meaningful work and experience a higher quality of life: “Several years ago the media started running stories about ‘Super Women’ who were opting to ‘drop out’ . . . What makes the ‘domo’ syndrome different is that now men have joined the exodus . . .” (*Springfield [Mass.] Advocate*). BACKGROUND: If *dink*, *nimby*, and *zoomer*—all previously defined in this column—were symptomatic of the ethos of the eighties, the acronym *domo*, from “downwardly mobile professional,” may be characteristic of the nineties. The *domo* trend, presaged perhaps by the *cocooning* observed in the mid-1980s, is being seen among thirtysomething careerists with well-paid spouses and considerable savings.

gastroporn *noun*, precious language and luscious photographs used to depict recipes or meals, as in gourmet cookbooks or on the menus of expensive restaurants: “This [book] may be the greatest example to date of what some wags call ‘gastroporn’” (*Newsweek*).

BACKGROUND: We have five years’ worth of citations for *gastroporn*, found in sources such as the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, *Food & Wine*, and *The New Republic*. In a 1990 story in the London *Sunday Times*, Dominic Lawson holds up as an example of *gastroporn* the following passage from Brillat-Savarin’s 1825 classic *La Physiologie de Goût*: “Following an admirable first course there appeared, among other dishes, a huge Berbezieux cockerel, truffled fit to burst, and a Gibraltar rock of Strasbourg foie gras. The sight produced a marked, but almost indescribable effect on the company. . . and when the loaded plates had been handed round I saw

Here are a few of the words being tracked by the editors of The American Heritage Dictionary, published by Houghton Mifflin. A new word that exhibits sustained use may eventually make its way into the dictionary. The information below represents the first stage of research, not the final product.

successively imprinted on every face the glow of desire, the ecstasy of enjoyment, and the perfect calm of utter bliss.”

hedonia hypothesis

noun, a hypothesis in neuropsychology holding that stress and other “negative hedonic states” tend to increase a subject’s eyeblink frequency, and that “positive hedonic states,” such as contentment and pleasure, tend to decrease eyeblink frequency. Also called *hedonia-blink hypothesis*. “In the blink of an eyelash, [Joseph J.] Tecce puts to work his *hedonia hypothesis*. . . . [He] has trained his . . . eyes on two statesmen caught in the crucible of world events, President Bush and . . . Saddam Hussein, who are locked in an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation in the Persian Gulf. If Tecce’s

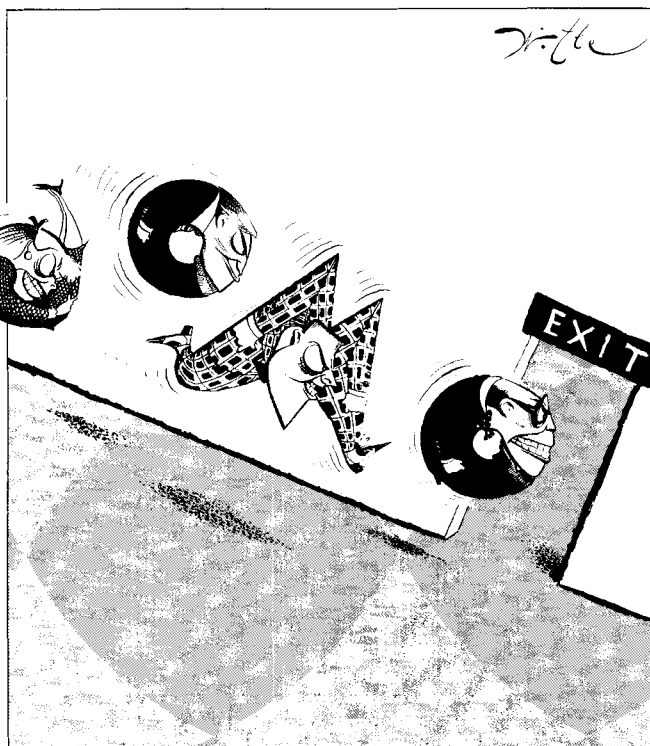
data are accurate, Saddam will blink first in the war of nerves” (*The Boston Herald*).

BACKGROUND: *Hedonia hypothesis*, related to *hedonics*, the branch of psychology that deals with pleasant and unpleasant conscious states and their relation to organic life (both have the Greek ancestor *hedone*, “pleasure”), was coined in 1978 by Tecce, a professor of neuropsychology at Boston College. Our definition of the term is based on material in Tecce’s article “Contingent Negative Variation (CNV) and Eyeblinks,” which appeared in 1989 in *Clinical Electroencephalography*. From videotapes of an interview with Saddam Hussein, Tecce has determined that Hussein registered 56 blinks per minute (BPM) when responding to a question about whether he

would be willing to debate George Bush and Margaret Thatcher; while listening to the translation of his answer he registered a full 120 BPM. Bush’s BPMs are considerably lower (in the 38-to-58 range during his August 8, 1990, news conference, which focused on Persian Gulf questions).

quux *noun, slang*, a temporary name that, like the more commonly used “foo” and “bar” (all three are called “meta-words”), is used by computer programmers to refer to sections of code when discussing programs: “People will say, ‘quux can call foo after quux has notified bar of its intentions’” (letter from Gary Sabot, of Thinking Machines Corporation). *Quux* is also the nickname for Guy L. Steele Jr., who coined the term.

BACKGROUND: Every once in a while we reprise a word because of unusual reader interest. And in this instance, as Sabot has pointed out to us, our original definition was incomplete. We first encountered *quux* in an untitled, unpublished list of computer jargon, compiled in 1982; it was subsequently included in *The Hacker’s Dictionary* (1983). *Quux* is an example of a relatively rare phenomenon in English: a word containing a double *u*. Our original piece listed nine other such words: *vacuum*, *residuum*, *continuum*, *menstruum*, *individuum*, *duumvirate*, *lituus*, *equus*, and *muumu*. To these can be added others found in a recent *American Speech* note and also contributed by *Atlantic* readers. They include *carduus* (a thistle), *commiscuum* (a subdivision of organisms), *equuleus* (a young horse), *mutuum* (a type of loan in Roman and civil law), *obliquus* (an oblique muscle), *suum* (a term imitative of the sound of the wind, used by Shakespeare), *triduum* (a term of three days), and *zuurveldt* (an African veld that is poor for grazing).



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